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PRAYERS

FOR

THE USE OF SCHOOLS.

BY N. TILLINGHAST,

PRINCIPAL OF STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, BRIDGEWATER, MASS.

BOSTON:

BENJAMIN B. MUSSEY & CO.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE are many teachers who desire to open their schools with prayer, who, in the solitudes of their chambers, do not fail to ask of God help in the performance of their daily duties, and who know how beautiful is the influence throughout the day of a sincere act of morning worship, and yet who, from various causes, do not feel willing to trust themselves to give utterance, in the presence of others, to their religious feelings. It not unfrequently happens, also, that those who are accustomed to lead in public prayer, find themselves in such a frame of mind, at the opening of their schools, that either the thought or the expression does not come freely to them, and they want some assistance in performing a service which cannot either be well omitted or postponed. It is in the hope of aiding such teachers that this collection of prayers is now published.

And the author may be allowed to present another reason for the publication; he has read these prayers for more than ten years in his own school, leading, he trusts, the devotion of many hundreds of pupils; and he cannot but believe that this volume will bring to many minds a pleasant and grateful remembrance of those seasons, when we together communed with the Father of our spirits. May His favor be with this publication, and may He grant that it shall prosper in the cause for which it is sent into the world.

PRAYERS FOR SCHOOLS.

ISAIAH LV.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful GOD, who, by thy power, didst create, and by thy mercy and wisdom hast upheld and guided us all our days, we desire to return thee our most hearty and humble thanks for all the blessings with which thou hast surrounded us: We thank thee for life, and for the innumerable mercies with which our lives are filled: We thank thee that thou hast made us after thine own image, and hast bid us aspire to no less perfection than thine: We thank thee that thine inspiration has given us understanding so that we may in some measure read thy works, and see thee, the Father of wisdom, exhibiting thyself in them all: We thank thee for the declaration of thy Holy Writ, that, as the rain and snow come down from heaven and return not thither, but water the earth, so that it brings forth seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall thy word be; that it shall not return to thee void, but shall prosper in the thing whereto thou didst send it. Grant, Almighty Father, that in our respective spheres, we may prove not unworthy ministers of this creative word: Grant that we may not have assembled this day in vain; but with deep gratitude to thee, and to the instruments whom thou hast raised up for the establishment of these means of learning, may we each, and all, set ourselves to the performance of our respective duties with earnestness, simplicity, and a godly sincerity. We ask and offer all in the name, and as the disciples of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and through him ascribe to thee all honor, and glory, world without end. AMEN.

LUKE IX. 28—48.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our most merciful Father, we thank thee for the mercy which again assembles us together: we thank thee for continued life, and for renewed light; but above all things, we thank thee for the offer of eternal life through Jesus Christ. May we learn that he is the life; that until we know him, we are truly dead; and that when he is formed in our hearts, we truly live. Assist us to learn that this mortal existence is only the field in which we are to acquire moral strength,; that here we are to contend faithfully and earnestly with spiritual wickedness, within and without, and learn to overcome it. We must, by the order of thy providence, enter into this cloud of trial and temptation; may we so strive that when it passes away, we may see the face of Jesus Christ, in all its glory, shining upon us. Grant that the duties of life may be to us as thy voice directing our steps: May the blessings of life, be to us as the breathings of thy paternal kindness: And may we regard the trials through which we must pass, as merciful warnings to us against setting our affections on things below. May that pure and undefiled religion which is pleasing to thee, be in us, which will teach us to comfort and relieve the afflicted, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. May the gifts which thou hast bestowed upon us, be hallowed in their use: May all who come within the circle of our influence, find it an assistance to them in their struggle for virtue. And may the grace of GOD, the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us, now and forever. AMEN.

JAMES II.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we, thy weak and ignorant creatures, come to thee, trying to render worthy thanks for thy mercies, and to ask aright for thy blessing. Grant us of thine infinite mercy, a portion of that faith which has distinguished thy prophets and saints, since the world began. May we remember, that "without faith, it is impossible to please thee; for he that cometh to GOD, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him:" And may we "add to this faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity;" so that our lives may be passed in thy fear, our duty done to thine acceptance, and we prove ourselves worthy of that high vocation wherewith thou hast called us in Jesus Christ. Not for ourselves only, would we pray to thee, but for every one who needs the blessings for which we ask. May the afflicted everywhere, have the consolations of thy Gospel: May the sick be healed of their infirmities, or be prepared for death: May the knowledge of thy truth be spread abroad over the whole earth; and may thy will be done here, as it is in heaven: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and forever. AMEN.

MATTHEW V. 1–26.

WE thank thee, Almighty Father, that we are again brought together in health, to renew our course of daily duty. We thank thee that we are so far brought on the journey of life; and may we pay thee our tribute of gratitude, by devoting that part which remains, to thy service, by good will and good services to our fellow-men, and by love and devotion to thee. We thank thee for the blessings with which thou hast filled our lives; for the light of that understanding, which cometh by thine inspiration; above all, for the Gospel of thy Son, which comes to us in love, which requires not of us burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but teaches us that thou hast respect to a contrite heart and a broken spirit.—We beseech thee, most merciful Father, to deliver us from the evil of this world: May we encourage no sinful thoughts, may we use no words that shall bring us into thy judgment, and may we perform no actions that shall need to be repented of. Lead us not, we entreat thee, into temptation, for we are very weak; and grant us the aid of thy Holy Spirit to enable us to fulfil thy commands. Let thy blessing be with those for whom we should pray; may our friends be thy friends; may the afflicted receive the consolations of thy Gospel; may those in any kind of danger, rest their hopes, and find their safety in thee. Send the knowledge of thy truth throughout the earth, and may thy name be sanctified here, and thy will be done here, as it is in heaven: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and forever. AMEN.

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 35—58.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our most merciful Father, we thank thee for the pleasant light of another day: We thank thee that we have been preserved through the darkness and the helplessness of another night; that thou, who never slumberest nor sleepest, hast kept watch over us, and hast assembled us once more together, to begin our course of daily duty: May it be begun and continued with an operating sense of thy presence, and with an earnest determination to do thy will. While we thank thee for safety through hours of physical darkness, may we not forget to render thee our deepest gratitude, that while the world was lying in the shades of ignorance and error, and sunk deep in the valley of the shadow of death, thou didst cause thy Sun of Righteousness to arise, and to shed over the whole earth the light of thy Gospel. May we each seek in it a light to guide our respective paths, and may we each find that narrow path which leadeth to eternal life. We thank thee, that thou hast not left us entirely ignorant of our future condition; but that, while we well know the power of sin here, we also know the way of escape, and the reward of virtue hereafter. Let thy blessing be with our friends, and with all for whom we should pray. Wilt thou have mercy on the sinful, on the ignorant, and on the afflicted everywhere; may they be purified by thy holiness, enlightened by thy wisdom, and supported and strengthened by thy love; and may the knowledge of thee, and of thy Son, Jesus Christ, be shed abroad over the whole earth; until, from every part of it, shall arise to thee ascriptions of glory and honor, thanksgiving and praise, forever. AMEN.

ECCLESIASTES I.

GRANT, most merciful Father, that we may not know that wisdom which bringeth grief, nor labor to acquire that knowledge that increaseth sorrow; but we beseech thee, grant to us that wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; so, that to us, thy world, and the order of thy providence shall not be vanity and vexation of spirit; but may we draw from them deep and joyful confidence in thee. Inspire us with the love of our fellow-men: May they be to us brothers with whom we rejoice in prosperity, and sympathise in adversity. We pray thee for the gift of thy Holy Spirit; that we may be fitted to enter upon the duties of life before us, by the acquisition of knowledge, by learning the wants of the mind, and by a deep faith in its capacities, and in its destinies. May we set before us, as our objects, those things which are truly to be desired, minds filled with knowledge, understandings freed from error, and enlarged and strengthened by constant acquisitions of truth, hearts purified from sin, and penetrated with the love of GOD and of man. Shouldst thou see fit to confer upon us stations of trust, honor, property, may we hold them as stewards of GOD; and, remembering the snares which they bring, may we ever seek help of thee in their use. Bless, we pray thee, our friends; may we and they love thee with pure hearts, fervently; and through our Lord Jesus Christ, render thee all praise and thanksgiving. AMEN.

1 CORINTHIANS I.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful GOD, we thank thee that thou hast opened to us the light of another day, and has permitted us to assemble once more in peace in this place of our accustomed employment. We have innumerable blessings for which we owe thee deep gratitude and heart-felt thanks; assist us, heavenly Father, to render them worthily. We thank thee for the privilege of coming nigh to thee in prayer, of communing according to our ability, with the all-wise, the all-powerful, and the all-good. By thy wisdom, enlighten our ignorance so that we may form proper conceptions of thee, and of our duty; by thy power, deliver us from temptation and from the mastery of sin; and by thy divine goodness, visit and cheer our inmost spirits, and so purify us, that we may know assuredly that GOD hath fixed his dwelling within our hearts. Grant us that love of our fellow-men which thou requirest of us; may there be no proper sacrifice for their benefit which we may not be ready to make. We return thanks to thee, that thou hast bound us so strongly to others in the ties of kindred and affection; and may we endeavor so to live that we may hope to rejoin our friends in that world where there is no parting, and no more death, neither any sorrow. May we each, according to the measure of our respective abilities, be instruments in spreading abroad the knowledge of thy truth. May we ever live as if love of thee was deeply impressed upon our hearts, and may thy name be hallowed there. We beseech thee to hear us, almighty Father, and answer us according to thy mercy. AMEN.

JAMES III.

LOOK with great mercy we humbly beseech thee, Almighty and most merciful Father, upon those of us now in thy presence who are soon to leave the support of parents and the enjoyments of home, and to go out into the world, to meet its trials, to undergo its temptations. May they so look to thee for strength and guidance, that they will not fail to receive them. May whatever comes to them in the shape of duty, be performed with earnestness and fidelity; whatever of affliction is in store for them, may they remember that it comes not of the ground, but is intended for their good; and may they draw from it the lesson which thou didst send it to convey. Whatever of prosperity is to be their portion, and we pray that it may be as much as thou knowest to be best for them, may they receive it gratefully. and use it wisely. Let thy blessing, heavenly Father, rest upon us all; may we live in thy fear, and may we have an abiding sense of thy constant presence, and of thy unspeakable excellence. Grant us thy Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled to try to conform ourselves to thy character. Be very merciful, we beseech thee, to our friends; may they be in thy holy keeping. Make us instruments, in our respective spheres, of spreading abroad the knowledge of thee, and of thy truth. And unto thee, through Jesus Christ, be all honor and praise, now and forever. AMEN.

ISAIAH LXI.

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven, we return thanks to thee for thine infinite mercies; that thou didst form us in thine image, and through the inspiration of thy spirit hast given us understanding; we humbly beseech thee to guide that understanding aright; may it not be misled by sophistry, nor turned aside by idleness; but may we use it conscientiously in seeking the good and the true, and fixing firmly upon it when found. May thy spirit be upon each one of us, so that in our little spheres, we may preach the gospel to the poor, open the eyes of those in intellectual and moral blindness, and bind up with our Christian sympathies all the wounds which it is permitted us to heal. Grant us a deep, sincere, and earnest reverence for the natures with which we have to deal: May all our influence upon those who may come under our charge be good, so that when we render our account to thee, we may hear the, "well done good and faitnful servant." Let thy blessing be with those who are here assembled; grant help to the teacher and to the taught; may we remember that NOW is the accepted time, NOW is the day of salvation; and may we labor diligently in the respective offices to which thou hast appointed us. Grant to us that truth and love which will fit us to be instruments in bringing thy kingdom of love and truth on the earth. Consecrate us wholly to thee; and thine shall be the praise, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

ROMANS VI. 1–18.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we thank thee for the revelations which thou hast made of thyself; for our intellectual and moral natures; that thou hast so placed us in thy creation, that we can even in the outward world trace out thee. Above all, we thank thee for the revelation of thyself as our Father, as loving each one of us with more than the love of an earthly parent. We beseech thee that we may receive that spirit of adoption whereby we may feel toward thee as children, and call upon thee with all our hearts as our Father. And grant, of thy grace, that we may look upon ourselves as children of a common parent, as heirs of a common immortal hope. May we cultivate love toward all of human kind, and strive by our conduct to all who may come within the circle of our influence, to manifest ourselves as thy children. Thy mercies are as boundless as thy creation. No cry comes to thine ear unheeded. So may we send forth our sympathy and aid to all who may need them. Whenever the voice of the poor, the cry of the needy, the groans of the oppressed, come up to our ears, may our hands and hearts be ready to offer help. May we not suffer our souls to die in the debasement of self-indulgence, in the sty of luxury or lasciviousness; and may we not try to load them with the burden of wealth; but may we keep them ready for every good work that thou dost appoint us to do, and able to run the race which thou mayest set before us. Thus may we go from strength to strength, till we are received into thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

MATTHEW VI. 16–35.

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. May we take it upon our lips with reverence, and endeavor to worship thee in purity of spirit. We would thank thee this morning for the light of another day; we bless thee for that light and heat which give life throughout thy universe, and continue in being every thing which exists. And we would endeavor more devoutly to thank thee for that inward light, that effluence of thy divine nature, which thou art ever ready to give to any who will ask thee aright, and which only can give true life. We are very sinful, ever wandering away from thee, seldom seeking to approach thee. Create within us, O God, clean hearts, and renew right spirits within us. Grant us, we beseech thee, thy holy spirit, and uphold with thy free spirit, that, being delivered from the bondage of sin, we may be free indeed. Bless, we humbly entreat thee, our absent friends. Send thine angel of health to those who are sick, or prepare them for their final change. May thy gospel spread throughout the earth, and have free course, and be glorified, by bringing to every man light and truth, justice and love; enlightening the understanding, freeing it from the mists of error, so that bigotry, superstition, unbelief, and all forms of idolatry may fade away; purifying the heart, that injustice and cruelty, oppression and wrong, and undue self-indulgence may be removed thence; and enlarging and elevating the affections, so that love to God and love to man may dwell in them supremely; and thus the whole earth become Emmanuel's land, the new Jerusalem, wherein dwelleth righteousness. AMEN.

JAMES I.

ALMIGHTY GOD, thou didst spread out the circle of the heavens alone; and thou hast filled all thy creation with manifestations of thine inconceivable power and majesty. All thy works praise thee; there is nothing, from the minutest atom to the mightiest orbs that are ever journeying through boundless space, which does not tell of thine infinite power and wisdom. We thank thee, that while in the contemplation of these truths, we may be lead to fear thou art too high for us, we hear thee inviting us in thy gospel to come unto thee, and to call thee Father. We thank thee, that while we are filled with a painful sense of our ignorance, we read in thy word, that we should ask wisdom of thee, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. May we strive with all our power to make ourselves worthy of thy mercies; may me live as thy children, sanctifying thy name in our hearts, and walking before thee as if in thy visible presence; and may we so ask wisdom of thee as to obtain some measure of it, so that our minds may be turned to higher things than the follies of the world. What thou hast set before us to do, may we do with all our hearts; and may we fill up the measure of our time and opportunity by good to our fellow-men, and by obedience and love to thee. Let thy blessing be with those whom thou hast connected with us in the ties of kindred and affection. May thy name be hallowed throughout all the earth, and thy will be done here as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and forever. AMEN.

ISAIAH XL. 1–17.

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven, we return thanks to thee for thine ever-watching care over us, that thy tender mercies are over all thy works. We thank thee, that from our earliest infancy, through days of helplessness and through nights of unconsciousness, we have been the objects of thy care and protection. May we seek to feel strongly this dependence on thee. May we bear steadily in mind, that in thee we live and move and have our being; and may we hallow thy name in our hearts. We thank thee for the privileges which thou has conferred upon us, that thou hast placed us in a land of freedom, especially of the freedom of opinion. May we use this privilege as not abusing it, trying all things, and laying fast hold on that which is good. We thank thee, that while kings and prophets, thine anointed, sought earnestly to know thy gospel, and sought in vain, thou hast graciously revealed it to us through Jesus Christ. May we make it the light of our paths, and may we make him, our blessed Saviour, our pattern and guide. Of whatever is necessary to our moral progress of which we are ignorant, do thou grant us knowledge; and whatever knowledge we have, wilt thou grant us grace to use. Let thy blessing be with those for whom we should pray; fill them with a love of thee; overcome in them all evil; confirm and strengthen them in all goodness. Grant that thy truth may illumine the whole earth, and that every kingdom and every people may come to the knowledge of thee, and of Jesus Christ whom thou didst send. AMEN.

JOHN VI. 41—59.

ALMIGHTY, All-wise and All-merciful Father, grant that we may understand all that is necessary to us of the mysteries of thy kingdom. May we know what it is to eat and to drink of Jesus Christ; may we feed ourselves on his instruction; may we drink largely of his spirit; may we learn from him that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; may we not make our object the accumulation of wealth, nor ease, nor pleasure on earth, but may we hunger and thirst after righteousness; may we labor to do our duty; may we strive to assist our fellow-men; may we set before us, as our task, to improve the hearts and enlarge the understandings of those who may come within our influence; may all our thoughts be given to rendering thee worthy service, and to securing thy favor, which is life, and thy loving kindness, which is better than life. We pray for thy blessing upon all sorts and conditions of men. Thou hast made us all of one blood: grant that we may not forget or deny this relationship, but that we may set ourselves with our whole ability to cause justice to be done, to overthrow the reign of oppression and wrong, and to spread abroad among men the love of God. Bless, we pray thee, our absent friends. Watch over and protect them from evil. May thy kingdom come upon earth, and thy will be done here as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. AMEN.

2 PETER III. 1–13.

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven, thou hast formed us in thine image, and hast revealed to us thy character, in the life, example and precepts of Jesus Christ. We humbly supplicate the influence of thy holy spirit, that we may seek to conform our characters to thine. Thou art all-gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. Fill us, we pray thee, with like dispositions. May we never be moved with anger, never act in passion, but first subduing ourselves, may we learn to subdue others in love. Help us, we pray thee, that in every action of our life, from the least to the greatest, we may be guided by what we know of thy will, and by that monitor which thou hast placed in our breasts. May we be wise unto salvation, by self-restraint, by humility, by purity, by love. Grant to us right views of duty, and give to each of us an earnest, steadfast spirit to perform it. May we feel our true relation to others; if they be placed under our care and guidance, O grant that it may be for their highest good; if we serve, may it be done with diligence and fidelity; thus, like the faithful servant, may we be prepared for our Lord's coming, and find our portion in the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Hasten, we pray thee, the coming of this kingdom; may swords be beat into plough-shares, and spears into pruning-hooks; may men no longer oppress or defraud; and may thy name be hallowed in every heart. AMEN.

HEBREWS XI. 24—40.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, thou hast seen fit to place us in a world of trial, of suffering, and of temptation; dangers beset us, afflictions wound us, and we are continually drawn away from the right by evil passions and unresisted desires; but thou hast not left us to bear our burdens unassisted; we hear continually a divine voice, saying, "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Grant us the power to accept this gracious invitation; may we ever look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; may we fix our hearts on him; and may we, with heedful steps, follow his precepts and his example. We beseech thine assistance in that peculiar race which is set before each of us; may whatever we are called upon to do, be done with earnestness and fidelity; may we work as in the day, knowing that the night of death comes soon to each of us, in which no one can work; may whatever we are called upon to suffer be borne with submission; may we remember that all chastening is from thee; and may we so use it, as to draw from it the peaceable fruits of righteousness; may the light of thy truth illumine the whole earth; and from every part of it, may there arise to thee ascriptions of honor and glory, thanksgiving and praise, through him that died to save us, ever our common Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

PSALM XXXIV.

We return thanks to thee, Almighty Father, that thou hast permitted us to assemble again in peace in this place of our accustomed employment. We thank thee for the measure of health, both of mind and body, that we enjoy; and we beseech thee to send upon us the healthful influence of thy grace, that being thus strengthened and directed, we may perform our duty with diligence, and fill up the measure of our time and opportunity by a steadfast exertion to do thy will. May we look for no other reward of our labors than the securing of thy favor, the good of our fellow-men, and the preparing of ourselves to join that great company of the just made perfect, which surrounds thy throne; may we ever remember that the eyes of the Lord are upon every one of us; and may we so live that his ears shall be open to our prayers; may a sense of thine immediate presence ever accompany us; and may we perform no acts and encourage no thoughts which we are not glad to know are open to thine inspection. May our friends be in thy holy keeping: are any sick among them? may our earnest prayers for them find acceptance with thee, and wilt thou raise them again to health: are we called to mourn the loss of any among them? may it not be as those without hope; but may we remember, that as Christ died and rose again, so shall every one that trusteth on him pass from death to life. May thy name be hallowed, and thy will be done throughout all the earth; for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, world without end. Amen.

LUKE IX. 10–27.

TEACH us, Almighty Father, to seek with earnestness, simplicity and a godly sincerity, the kingdom of heaven. Purify our hearts from all wrong desires; deliver our understandings from all false doctrines; and enable us so, rightly, to compare temporal and eternal things, that we may be delivered from too great love of the world, and of the things of the world, and learn to set our affections on things above. May we regard life as that field of trial which thou intendest it shall be, and while we travel through it, beset with temptations and dangers, may we be enabled by the light of thy gospel, and the influence of thy holy spirit, to enter in at the strait gate, and to follow the narrow way that leadeth aright. In our weakness, we would look to thee for strength; in our blindness, we would lean on thee for guidance; and we ask grace of thee that we may not be misled by sin, nor overcome of evil, but that in all our trials we may ever come to thee through Jesus Christ, and find support and assistance in every time of need. We would not pray for ourselves alone, but for all the inhabitants of the earth; may every land where error and sin sit brooding in darkness, be illuminated with thy truth. And while throughout creation the tribute of gratitude is rising to thee from all thy works, may the heart of universal man also join the mighty chorus, in ascribing to thee glory, honor, and praise, now and forever. AMEN.

PSALMS CXXXIX.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, at the beginning of another day of our accustomed employment here, we would return thanks to thee for having permitted us to assemble once more in peace, in the enjoyment of our usual health, and in possession of our faculties of acquiring knowledge. May we use the blessings which thou hast conferred upon us, as if we were always in thy visible presence; and may a sense that we cannot be hid from thy spirit, and cannot flee from thy presence, be to us a source of the highest happiness, instead of being, what we make it, our bitterest punishment. In times of joy, or of sorrow; of prosperity, or of adversity, may we turn to thee, and find such help that we shall not be overcome of temptation. May all the pleasures of life be received as from thee, and be enjoyed as thou wouldst have us enjoy them; may the evils of life be so borne as to strengthen us in the way of right, and may the duties of life, being performed in thy fear, and in the remembrance of the example and precepts of Jesus Christ, be the means of acquiring thy favor, which is life, and thy loving kindness, which is better than life. Be very merciful, we beseech thee, to those whom thou hast bound to us in the ties of kindred and affection; let no evil befal them; may they not be tempted beyond their strength; and may they and we so live that we may be rejoined in the world beyond the grave. May the knowledge of thy truth be shed abroad among the nations; and throughout all the earth, from every heart and from every tongue, may there be ascribed to thee honor, and glory, thanksgiving and praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

MATTHEW XX. 1–16.

ALMIGHTY GOD, thou didst by thy word call into being everything that exists throughout this boundless creation, and by thy power everything subsists; for without thy constantly supporting hand, all things would return to the nothingness from which they came, and the universe would be again filled by thee alone. Thy years are from everlasting to everlasting, and thy knowledge embraces eternity; we, the creatures of a day, who scarcely had a yesterday, and may have no to-morrow, too ignorant to understand the least of the mysteries which surround us, and too weak to control even the slightest event in thy providence, could only have bowed down before thee in awe, penetrated with the thoughts of thy boundless power and inaccessible majesty, if thou hadst not graciously sent to us through Jesus Christ, the message of thy love. He came, having thy spirit without measure, the express image of thy person, to seek and to save that which, without him, was lost. He came in love, and he has instructed us that thou art not only the maker and preserver of thy children, but their father. May we receive grace to come unto thee through our mediator, and to arrive at that perfect love of thee that casteth out fear. Deliver us, we pray thee, from all temptation too hard for us, keep us from evil, and reject us not if we turn to thee now, at the eleventh hour. We would remember in our prayers those dear friends with whom thou hast connected us; fill them and us with the knowledge and the love of thee; and may thy name be hallowed throughout the earth, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. AMEN.

1 PETER I.

All flesh is grass, and the glory of man is as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away; but thy word, Almighty Father, endureth forever. We desire to feel duly grateful that thou hast revealed to us, through thy word, thy boundless love and inexhaustible mercy; so that in adversity and affliction, surrounded by the bitterest evils of life, and even in the defilements of sin, we can ever call on thee, and find grace to help us in every time of need. Fill us, we beseech thee, with the proper sense of the relation which we hold to thee, that thou art ever waiting to be gracious, that thy tender mercies are over us, and that there is joy even among the angels of Heaven over one poor erring mortal who turns to forsake his sins. We thank thee for everything which thou hast done for us; for our lives and our means of living; for our moral and intellectual faculties, and the opportunities for exerting them; may we regard and use every event of thy providence which befalls us, whether it bring enjoyment, or suffering; whether it be to do or to bear, as a means granted by infinite mercy of finding the narrow way which leads to eternal life. We thank thee that thou hast permitted us to assemble here to advance ourselves in knowledge, and to acquire the power of assisting others; may we so use our opportunities, that on the great day of account we shall not come into thy condemnation for talents neglected or misapplied. Let thy blessing be with those for whom we should pray; may the knowledge of thy truth be spread abroad among the nations, and in every heart may thy name be hallowed. We ask and offer all in the name and as the disciples of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

EZEKIEL XXXIV. 1–16.

WE return thanks to thee, Almighty Father, that thou hast again permitted us to assemble in this place of our accustomed employment; may we duly appreciate the privileges which thou hast conferred upon us; may we remember all the blessings with which thou hast surrounded us; that thou hast given us life and such measure of health as we enjoy; that thou hast furnished us with a thousand sources of pure pleasure; that thou hast given us friends, and connected us with them in ties of strong affection; and above all, that thou hast in thy gospel, brought life and immortality to light through Jesus Christ, and hast shown us clearly the way of attaining it. May all our words, thoughts and actions be regulated by what we know of thy will; may we receive all thy dispensations to us as tokens of thy favor, and use them as the means of securing our highest happiness. Should sorrow visit our dwellings, may we say with the ancient patriarch, "Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not also receive evil?" and may we bow with submission to thy will, and draw from the affliction the lesson which it is sent to convey. Forgive us all our transgressions as we from our hearts forgive all who may have offended us. Grant us such things as are necessary to our comfortable subsistence; deliver us from evil, and may thy name be hallowed in our hearts; and through Jesus Christ we would ascribe to thee all honor and glory, now and ever. AMEN.

LUKE IV. 1–21.

WE return thanks to thee, Almighty Father, that thou hast permitted us once more to assemble in peace, in this place of our accustomed employment. We thank thee that thou hast given us the means, as well as the faculties of acquiring knowledge. Grant us the influence of thy good spirit, that we may use all these blessings to thy service, and to the promotion of our highest good. We thank thee for thy gospel, for the life, example, and precepts of him who came to declare it; we thank thee that he was tempted like as we are, because we know that we have an high priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and we beseech thee, for his sake, that whatever is dark in us, thou wilt illumine; whatever is low, raise and support; so that we may become worthy instruments to do thy will, and thus obtain thy favor, which is life, and thy loving-kindness, which is better than life. Let thy blessing be with those for whom we should pray; may our friends be in thy holy keeping; may they never be called to mourn, either on their own account, or on ours, for opportunities wasted, or powers misapplied. Send comfort to all who are in any way afflicted in body or in mind; may they be ministered to according to their several necessities. May the knowledge of thee be spread abroad over the earth; and may all men come to the worship of the true GOD through Jesus Christ their common Saviour. AMEN.

LUKE X. 25–37.

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven, we desire to return to thee the tribute of our deepest gratitude, that thou hast not left us wrapped in clouds of ignorance and error respecting thine attributes; but, that, when the world was lying in darkness, and wandering in the mazes of superstition and unbelief, thou didst send into it thy glorious gospel, and didst commission thy well beloved Son to go forth, a perfect light, and an unfailing guide to all who trust in his name. We thank thee that there is no duty which he has left untaught; we thank thee for the revelation of that great brotherhood which connects each man with every other man; for that instruction which bids us know a brother in every one who needs our sympathy for his suffering, or our assistance in his necessity. Guide us, we beseech thee, in our path of life; may it be to each of us the way of holiness; may no unclean thing dwell there; but supported by thy power, and directed by thy guidance, may each day's journey bring us one step nearer thee. Let thy blessing be with those whom we should remember before thee; may they be in thy holy keeping. May the world brighten in the light of the sun of righteousness. May the knowledge of thee and of him whom thou didst send, be spread abroad among the nations, and may thy name be every where glorified. We ask and offer all in the name, and as the disciples of thy Son and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

PSALM CIV.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our Heavenly Father, we are living the monuments of thy mercy; thou hast during our lives supplied us with everything necessary to our comfortable subsistence. Thou openest thy hand and we are filled with good; thou takest away our breath, we die and return to the dust; thou sendest forth thy spirit, we are created. We desire to thank thee, Father, for all thy mercies; they come to us so certainly and so regularly, that we are liable to think they are our due, and to forget the giver. Grant us the spirit of gratitude, and may we show it not in words and thoughts only, but in action, in the performance of duty, in love and good services to our fellow men, in reverence to thee, and in obedience to thy laws. We would beseech thee for every assistance that thou dost ever give to thy creatures in the formation of our moral character, in attaining that true life which shall be with us when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved. Send thine angel of mercy to our friends, keep them in thy holy keeping. We thank thee that we are permitted to love one another; and we thank thee that if, in the course of thy providence, friends must be parted for a time or forever, still the memory and the thought are not bound, but go freely forth to make a present of the past and of the future. Send the love of God into all hearts, and may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done here as it is done in heaven, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, now and forever. AMEN.

1 TIMOTHY VI.

We pray thee, Almighty Father, to deliver us from the undue love of worldly things; may our strongest desire be fixed on the performance of our duty. May we cultivate a real and pure love towards those who may come under our influence; may it be an ever present object with us to do everything in our power for their benefit; may we strive so to conduct ourselves towards them, that when we meet them in another life, we may feel that we have no sin of omission or commission, in regard to them, to repent of. Deliver us from the snare of riches, and grant that we may not fall under the temptation of want. We pray thee for thy mercy on all sorts and conditions of men; on the rich, that remembering how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God, they may strive against their peculiar danger, and make God their trust, and communicate freely to others of their abundance; on the poor, that they may not be tempted in their want to lose their trust in thee, and to forget that even the sparrow falls not to the ground unmarked of thee. May we set before ourselves those things which are worthy of being followed, righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. May we struggle earnestly and faithfully lest the trials and allurements of life lead us away from thee; and having fought the good fight of faith, may we in the end find that we have laid hold on eternal life. We ask and offer all in the name, and as the disciples of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

JOHN I. 1–18.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we thank thee for the renewed light of the sun, which calls us from sleep and opens to us again the beauties and delights of thy creation. All things are filled with beauty; thou hast poured it out in measureless profusion around us; thy whole creation smiles towards its Creator, and speaks of the boundless love which has provided for thy children such stores of pure, never-ceasing pleasure; and we thank thee, O our Father, for this; but we would feel a deeper gratitude that thou hast permitted the Sun of righteousness to illuminate our minds with light from thee. We thank thee that thy word, powerful to create and to renew, was sent into the world, and that we come within its influence. Grant us thy blessing, our Father, that the life of Jesus Christ may be our light in this world; give us the power to walk by it, and thus shall we be secure from evil. May this light so enter our hearts as to guide us in all that we attempt to do for ourselves and others. May we in our humble spheres seek so to shine by this divine light, that men, seeing our good works, may glorify our common Father who is in heaven. Grant us, we beseech thee, the blessings which we severally need; above all, an earnest confidence in thy love and mercy, and a hope of constant progress in drawing nigher and nigher to thee, through Jesus Christ, and we would ever render to thee our praise and thanksgiving. AMEN.

HEBREWS X. 19–39.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, grant of thine infinite mercy that it may not be utterly in vain that we have been permitted to assemble here together, day after day; that we have been created with intellects capable of embracing thy truth, and with moral natures fitting us to know and love goodness. Assist us, we humbly beseech thee, to use our powers aright; may what we have to do be performed with an earnest steadfastness; may we try to benefit all who come within the circle of our influence. As thou lovest us, and art not willing that any should perish, so may we do all in our power to deliver our fellow-men from intellectual and moral evil; to this end we pray thee to enlighten our understandings, purify our desires, deliver us from all wrong motives, strengthen us to the performance of duty, and above all, grant us thy holy spirit, and enable us to come to thee through that new and living way which has been consecrated for us. Let it not be in vain that the blood of thy well-beloved Son was poured out for us, but grant that we may be baptised into his spirit, and through him, come unto thee. Let thy blessing be with those from whom we are for a season parted. We pray for a world lying in ignorance, error and sin; send abroad thy gospel freely among the nations, and may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. AMEN.

1 CORINTHIANS XIII.

WE thank thee, universal Parent, that thou hast counted us members of thy great family of man; we thank thee that thou hast connected us with a part of our race in strong ties of kindred and affection, and that thou hast granted us faculties capable of embracing all our kind in comprehensive charity. We thank thee that we have in thy gospel the declaration of thy love to all thy creatures, and in the example and precepts of Jesus Christ a guide to ourselves in obtaining and manifesting this universal benevolence. He came filled with purest love to man, to seek and to save that which was lost, to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to bring deliverance to captives, and to open the eyes of the blind. He looked for no reward, save the approbation of thee and of his own conscience; and when forsaken by those he loved, and persecuted by those he would have saved, his last prayer was, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Assist us, Almighty Father, to cultivate such a temper. May we use the faculties which thou hast given us, and our opportunities for their improvement, in preparation to benefit our fellow-men; and may no repulses dishearten us, and no disappointments turn us from doing all in our power for their good. May we, while cultivating our social affections, train also our religious feelings, until our whole hearts are filled with love to thee, and to Jesus Christ, whom thou didst send to show forth thy love to us. AMEN.

PSALMS CXLIII.

WE would again, Almighty GOD, come into thy more immediate presence, and bow ourselves in adoration before thee. Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory; and while there goes up from angels and archangels, from the great company of thine apostles, from the noble army of martyrs, from the multitude of the just made perfect, who surround thy throne, and from thy universal church here on earth, a song of honor, and glory, thanksgiving and praise unto thee, the everlasting Father, may our hearts and voices join the mighty anthem, and in gratitude, at least, unite with this cloud of witnesses. We cannot use the faculties which thou hast given us, without feeling that surely there is a spirit in man, and that the inspiration of the Almighty has given him understanding. Gracious Father, grant that we may not quench this spirit, that we may not degrade this understanding; but that we may improve and cultivate it, so that it may lead us to the full knowledge of thee from whom it came. We thank thee that we are not left to ourselves in this direction and use of our faculties, but that Christ, the way, and the life, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, is a perfect model and an ever-living example for us. Grant us grace to form ourselves according to that model, and to direct ourselves by that example; may the like spirit be in us, that was also in him, and may we, through him, come to be received as thy children. Grant this day that we fall into no sin; but that all our doings being governed by thine ordinance may be righteous in thy sight. AMEN.

PROVERBS I. 20—33.

WE desire to feel very grateful to thee, Almighty Father, for the blessings with which thou hast filled our paths; especially would we now give thanks to thee for the assistances which thou hast given us in acquiring knowledge. May we use them with fidelity; may nothing which will help us on our way seem too small, and nothing which we *can* overcome be thought too difficult. May we use the means which thou hast given us with a fervent zeal, and with a perfect sincerity, so that our thoughts and exertions may be devoted to securing, in the fullest manner possible, the object for which we are assembled. We are instructed in thy word, that, if any man lack wisdom, he should ask of GOD, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; grant us, we beseech thee, a portion of this wisdom, which will teach us that knowledge alone is not sufficient for us, but that to our knowledge we should add faith, and to our faith, virtue, and to our virtue, humility, before we can hope to approach to that highest knowledge which consists in knowing thee. Bless with thy choicest blessings all those with whom thou hast connected us in ties of kindred and affection; may we be united in an earnest love of thee. Bring us not, we pray thee, into any temptation too strong for us; deliver us from the evil that is ever misleading us. May thy kingdom come on earth, and thy will be done here, as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

1 JOHN III.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we earnestly thank thee for the revelation which thou hast made of thyself to us. We thank thee that in every part of thy creation we see evidence of thine existence, and of thy power and majesty. We thank thee that we cannot look closely into the processes of nature without seeing manifested therein that love of thy creatures which provides for every want, and secures to all the largest amount of happiness. But above all, we thank thee for the revelation of thy love made through Jesus Christ, that thou so lovest us that thou didst send thy only Son to die for us on the cross. May we, through him, approach thee in confidence; may we give thee our whole hearts, and come to that perfect love of thee that casteth out fear. May we learn from thy religion to love one another; may we regard all mankind, of whatever condition, as the brethren to whom thou hast connected us; grant, we beseech thee, that our love may not be confined to feeling merely, but that it may display itself in action, and, when necessary, in self-sacrifice. Shed forth thy truth, with power, among the nations, that all may know thee, from the greatest to the least, and that the brotherhood which results from being thy children may be acknowledged throughout all the earth. And may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done here, as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and forever. AMEN.

MATTHEW VI. 1–15.

MOST merciful Father, we beseech thee that, by the grace of thy holy spirit, we may be delivered from temptation and from the power of evil, and be guided and directed in the way of truth. Grant that our understandings may not be darkened by giving ourselves up to sin, but that they may be illuminated by light from Heaven. May we be grateful to thee for the innumerable blessings with which thou hast surrounded us; for life, which even if it be a season of trial, may, if rightly employed, be the path to a never-ending existence in a happier sphere; for our intellectual natures, which open to us the wonder of thy universe, and which enable us to contemplate thy character; for our moral natures, as being formed in thine image and giving us the power of seeking thy perfections. We thank thee for the means which thou hast furnished us of improving our capacities; may we use them conscientiously, keeping ever in our minds the objects for which we are assembled, and the thought that thou wilt assuredly require us to render an account of all that we have done to improve our opportunities. We thank thee that our lot has fallen to us within the glorious light of thy gospel; may it shine into our hearts; and may the knowledge of it go forth among the nations, until every people may know thee, the Father Almighty, and Jesus Christ, whom thou didst send; and unto thy name, through him, be ascribed all praise and glory, now and forever. AMEN.

ACTS III.

ONCE more, most merciful Father, do we return thanks to thee who never slumberest nor sleepest, that thine eye watched us during the hours of our unconsciousness, and that thy powerful hand hast kept us from danger since we last met. We thank thee that we are again assembled in health of body and in soundness of mind, to undertake our usual employments. May all thy mercies be received into grateful hearts, and may all our duties be performed in thy fear. Support and strengthen each of us now before thee, according to our respective wants. May we each seek to perform with fidelity, simplicity, and a godly sincerity, whatever may be appointed for us to do. May we never lose sight of the responsibilities which rest upon us, and may we so prepare ourselves to bear them, that at the close of life we may look back to every duty towards thee, towards others, and towards ourselves, well and faithfully performed. To this end, we would implore thy mercy, and the guidance of thy holy spirit, by which we may be supported in temptation, kept from the power of evil, and led to refer in every case, to thy will. May we, while we are assembled here, perform our duties in a manner acceptable to thee; may we be kept in safety under the shadow of thy wing. Accept, we beseech thee, our prayers in behalf of our friends. May they be in thy holy keeping. Make us instruments, according to our respective abilities, in spreading abroad the knowledge of thee and of thy truth; and may the whole earth be enlightened by thy gospel, until from every land is returned to thee honor, praise and thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

ACTS XVII. 16–32.

MOST merciful Father, we thank thee that thou hast not left us to grope after thee in blindness and ignorance, nor to erect altars to a false or an unkown God; but that, through Jesus Christ, thou hast revealed thyself, the universal parent, for whom immensity is not too large, nor the heart of the humblest of thy creatures too small. We beseech thee that we may read aright the record of thyself which is exhibited to us in thy word and in thy works, and that we may draw from it, such lessons of confidence and trust in thee as shall enable us to bear with fortitude and improvement all the trials of life. Be present with each of us, we beseech thee, Almighty Father, that in the various temptations to which we must be exposed, we may fall into no sin, but that all our doings, being governed by thine ordinance, may be righteous in thy sight. Let thy blessing be with our absent friends; let no evil befall them. Let thy blessing be with us as we are assembled before thee, and may we never have cause to look back upon this season as one of neglected duties or misapplied powers, but may we each take some steps here on that onward progress which will lead us to eternal life. Open to us, we pray thee, more and more widely, the object of our creation; teach us that we are not placed in thy universe, having the whole system of things ministering to our necessities, merely for our enjoyment, that we may eat, drink, and be merry; but may we learn, that we are here to do thy will, to perform our duty, to assist our fellow-men, to glorify God; and we pray for help to enable us to do aright what thou requirest. And unto thee be all honor, and glory, now and forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

JOHN XIV. 1–17.

We thank thee, merciful Father, for the privilege of assembling once more in this place of our accustomed employment, and for the opportunity of endeavoring to advance ourselves somewhat in knowledge. May we be faithful and diligent in improving our opportunities. May we, with all our getting, get understanding, that we may know something of thee and thy character, and of our relations to thee. May we be able to come to the true way, and to walk therein steadily and earnestly; and so to serve thee acceptably, that it shall be fulfilled which is written, that thou wilt come and dwell with us, and make thine abode with us. Such measure of worldly good as thou seest to be best for us, do thou mercifully grant. We ask not for health, or honors, or property, if they will tend to make us deny or forget thee; we shun not disease, or suffering of any kind, if by that means we may be made holier, less selfish, more dependent on thee. We would humbly ask thee for deliverance from temptation too hard for us, and that we may not be given up into the power of evil. We acknowledge that we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and that we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and we beseech thee for thy forgiveness, and the assistance of thy holy spirit, that wherein we have done evil we may do so no more. Sanctify us, we pray thee, through thy truth, and may we grow thereby into eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PSALM XXXVII. 23–40.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, again would we thank thee for the privilege of uniting together to render our thanks to thee for thy mercies, to ask thy forgiveness for our sins, and to pray thee for that guidance, that support and that protection which we so much need. We return our gratitude, that thou didst see fit to create us in thy image, with faculties to know and love thee, and with power to aspire to thy perfections. We thank thee that, while thou art so removed from us that no eye has seen thee or can see thee, that none can search thee out unto perfection, thou hast sent thy Son, the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy person, to point out to us the way of eternal life, and to purge us of our sins. May it not be in vain that Christ offers us thy salvation; may we come to him with humility, and striving to walk in his footsteps, may we thus be enabled, thy grace assisting us, to approach towards thee. Wilt thou order our steps aright; may we depart from evil and do good; may thy law be ever in our hearts, so shall we dwell with thee forever more. Be present with us now, we beseech thee, Almighty Father, while we engage in the duties of the day; may they be performed with fidelity; and being done in thy fear, may they be sanctified to our moral and intellectual improvement. May thy kingdom come on earth; may man no longer oppress his brother man, but dwell with him in justice, in mercy, and in truth; thus may the world brighten in the light of thy sun of righteousness. AMEN.

LUKE V. 17–26.

AGAIN would we thank thee, Almighty Father, for the privilege of uniting our hearts once more together in praise of thee, and of expressing our gratitude for the multitude of thy mercies to us. We thank thee that Jesus Christ was sent on earth to direct our steps to eternal life, and we thank thee for the record which has come down to us of what he said and what he did. Though he is no longer among us to heal our bodily diseases, grant to us, we beseech thee, that earnest faith which will bring our sins before him for their cure. O Lord, we would believe, help thou our unbelief. We are surrounded on every side by trials and temptations; we have suffered the chains of evil habits to bind us fast; deliver us, we humbly entreat thee; we pray that we may hear from thee the gracious message, thy sins are forgiven. Then may we live worthy of thy great goodness, fulfilling to the utmost of our power every duty of life. Bless, we pray thee, Almighty Father, the object which has brought us together, and the means used to attain to it; fill us with such dispositions as thou desirest for thy children; may we be teachable, kind, just and true; save us from all thoughts, words, and actions, that will tend to separate us from thee; forgive our sins, and help us to walk in the footsteps of thy Son, and to become like him who was set as an example for us; thus living, may we, when the end comes, be received into heaven. We ask and offer all, as the disciples of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

ACTS XI. 1–18.

WE return thanks to thee, most merciful Father, that thy protecting care has kept us from harm since we last met, and that thou hast mercifully permitted us to assemble once more together, to begin our daily duties. We thank thee that there has never been lost to the earth all trace of the true God; thou didst commit thy oracles to thy chosen nation, and thus didst keep alive in their minds a knowledge of thine attributes. We owe thee our deepest gratitude that, through Jesus Christ, we have learned thy mercy and boundless love; to us, thou hast revealed thyself as the universal Father, loving all thy creation; who art not willing that any should perish, but desirest that all should come to everlasting life. Thou hast instructed us, that all thy children are equal in thy sight; that thou hast made of one blood all nations of men; that none are to thee, common or unclean; grant to us, that we may not be led, by a wicked and foolish pride, to despise any of our brethren because of their condition, and may we strive to cherish love towards all, and to do good to all as we may have opportunity. Be present with us, we beseech thee, Heavenly Parent; pour out in our hearts an abundant love of thee and of our fellow-men. May we, with earnestness, fidelity, and a godly sincerity, seek to perform every duty of life. May we, to the utmost of our ability, seek to spread abroad the knowledge of thee, and of Jesus Christ; and through him to thee, we would render all praise, now and forever. AMEN.

ACTS V. 17—42.

WE would return thanks to thee, most merciful Father, that we are once more permitted to assemble to begin our course of daily duty. Grant us, we pray thee, the influence of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perform thy will acceptably. Whatever evil threatens us, whatever opposition may set itself against us, may we not be prevented from seeking to do our duty, and may we remember that our first duty is owed to thee, that we ought to obey God rather than men. We thank thee that we are not exposed to bonds, or imprisonment, or death for our belief in Christ; and we beseech thee so to help us, that none of those trials which must befall us, shall lead us to deny or conceal our belief in him; but grant, that under the influence of it, we may try to copy his character, and to follow his precepts. May thy law, sent to us through prophets and apostles, and above all, through Jesus Christ, be written on our hearts, and may our whole lives be guided by it; and to this end, we pray that we may habitually judge of our words, thoughts, and actions with reference to thy will; and may we encourage no thoughts, speak no words, and perform no acts, which are not in conformity to that will. Let thy blessing be with those with whom thou hast connected us; may they be kept in health and safety under the shadow of thy wing. We ask, and offer all, in the name and as the disciples of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

JOB V.

MOST merciful Father, we desire to feel in every event of life, that it is by thy providence we are directed and supported; that in thee we live and move and have our being. Grant that we may look on all the trials of life as means granted by thee for the formation and improvement of our moral character. May we habituate ourselves to look upon the events which happen to us as being parts of the great system of thy government; and since, so far as we can see, the laws of thy providence are infinitely merciful, so may we regard that portion of them which may directly affect us. Thus feeling ourselves surrounded by evidences of thy loving kindness, may we, moved with love and gratitude, seek steadily and with sincerity to do in every thing thy will. We pray thee to bless the purpose which assembles us together; may we use conscientiously the means which thou hast granted us for our advancement in knowledge; may we remember that we are accountable to thee for every talent and for every opportunity which we enjoy, and wilt thou so help us, that when we render our account to thee, we may each hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." May thy blessing be with our friends. Wilt thou, in mercy, visit a world lying in ignorance and sin, where oppression and injustice, where idolatry and superstition, where self-indulgence and forgetfulness of God, hold so large dominion; let thy purifying spirit go abroad upon it; wilt thou sit as a refiner, and purge the nations till untruth and impiety shall cease, and until men shall offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

JOHN XII. 35—50.

WE thank thee, most merciful Father, for the light of another day. Grant that it may be to us a day of mental progress; while it is filled with the abundance of thy mercies, may it be marked also with our gratitude. We pray that we may possess that fear of thee which is the beginning of wisdom; and may we go on so to hallow thy name in our hearts, that we may at length come to that perfect love of thee which casteth out fear. Grant us all things which are necessary to our comfortable subsistence. What thou providest for us, may we freely impart to the necessities of others. May no trials deter us from duty; may no allurements lead us from the right; may our light so shine, without ostentation, but without reserve, that those within its influence may be induced to seek the like illumination. And may we ever turn to Jesus, the light and the life, and seek with all truthfulness and all earnestness to follow his precepts and his example; so that we may become more and more animated with his spirit, and thus find ourselves at the close of every day in closer communion with him and with thee. Grant to us, Almighty Father, that in whatever sphere we may be placed, we may so perform its duties as to secure thy favor, which is the true life. Let thy blessing be with our absent friends, and may the Grace of thy Holy Spirit rest on them and on us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

PSALM XIII.

ALMIGHTY GOD, thou art so great and we so feeble, thou art so removed from the observation of our senses, that we are apt to ask, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" and to fear that thou carest not for us; and hence we would thank thee that we have so many instances recorded in thy word of thine ear's being open to the prayer of thy servants. Let us, most merciful Father, come nigh to thee this morning; accept our gratitude for the mercies which we ever enjoy. Grant us thy protection against the evils of life, and thy guidance in its duties. May we not fall under the power of evil; but be delivered from temptation, and led to put our whole trust in thee. May we bear in mind steadily this day the purpose for which we are assembled; may it be a day consecrated to our intellectual and moral improvement; may we work earnestly, as in the day, remembering that the night cometh when no man can work. Thou hast blessed us in providing us with means for advancing in knowledge; thou hast revealed to us thy character, that we may love and adore thee; and thou hast bestowed upon us sympathies connecting us with our kind in endearing bonds of affection; help us, O Father, that we may not degrade our nature by neglecting or refusing to improve these high privileges, but wilt thou assist us so to use them that we may become worthy to be thy children. Bless, we beseech thee, our absent friends; grant them every needed blessing. May the whole earth come to the knowledge of thee and of Jesus Christ, and through him render to thee all honor, praise and thanksgiving, now and ever. AMEN.

LUKE XX. 27–40.

WE would endeavor this morning to raise our hearts to thee, Almighty Father, in gratitude for thy infinite mercies. We thank thee for the care which watched us and protected us during our hours of unconsciousness; we thank thee that, with the returning light, our spirit, lost in slumber, has returned to us to bear, upon it the impress of what we this day do, or leave undone. And assist us, GOD of all mercy, so to show our gratitude to thee, that when we this night lie down again upon our beds, it may be with a consciousness that we have earnestly endeavored to become more worthy of thy loving kindness, by greater fidelity to duty, by freeing ourselves from wrong motives, by a deeper love to our brethren of the human family, and by purifying our hearts. Grant us wisdom from above, that we may learn to deal aright with our moral and intellectual natures; may we bear in mind that death is "but a circumstance in our being;" that thou art not a GOD of the dead, but of the living; and may we so devote ourselves to do thy will here, that hereafter, in whatever sphere we may be placed, we may find ourselves able to do acceptably what is set before us to do. We pray to thee for all sorts and conditions of men; may bondage and oppression cease from off the earth; may the light of thy gospel of freedom be diffused over the whole world, and may all its inhabitants unite in ascribing to thee all honor and glory, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

ACTS XVI. 16–34.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our heavenly Father, we return humble and hearty thanks to thee for all thy mercies and loving kindness to us in our creation, preservation, and in the means of our redemption. We thank thee that thou hast, from time to time, raised up devout and earnest men, who have been ready to sacrifice every earthly interest, when it came in opposition with the truth and the right. Grant to us, we beseech thee, a portion of this spirit; may we, too, set to ourselves the task of faithful obedience; devoting ourselves, with all fidelity, to the performance of every duty which thou mayst require of us, bearing with submission every cross that thou mayst put upon us, counting it all gain, if, through any sacrifice of temporal interest, through any labor, through any affliction, we may attain thy favor, which is life, and thy loving kindness, which is better than life. We pray thee for strength; we are of ourselves too weak to carry out even our own imperfect ideas of right; grant us that help which cometh through thy Son; thou hast sent him to lead us to thee; may he be our guide, our support, our deliverer. Let thy blessing be on us and on those whom we love, and may we, being guided by thy word, shun temptation, and overcome evil, and thus attain to thy kingdom; a kingdom of light and truth, a kingdom of love and of holiness, a kingdom of purity, of peace and of joy in the Holy Ghost. And may this thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

JOHN XVI.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we thank thee, that by prophets and apostles and teachers, and above all, by Jesus Christ, thou hast made known to us the good tidings which come to us by thy gospel. May the light of it shine in our hearts; may we be guided by it in all our words, thoughts, and actions; may we have that spirit of faith by which we believe that we are under the guidance of infinite wisdom and boundless mercy. Whatever we may have of trial or affliction; whatever we may suffer from deprivations, from bodily infirmities, or from any of the chastenings of thy hand, may these visitations be so received, so borne, and so used, as to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And may the blessings with which thou hast surrounded us, the health of our bodies and minds, the powers of enjoying thy glorious world and works, the love of friends, the hope of future usefulness and enjoyment; may all these things be received by us as the tokens of thy love, and tend to draw us into closer communion with thee. We ask for thy blessing on all whom we should remember in our prayers; may they live in the love of thee, that all things may work together for their good. May the knowledge of thee, through the instruments which thou mayest appoint, be shed abroad over the whole earth; and may thy will be done here, as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

1 THESSALONIANS V.

WE desire to return thanks to thee, most merciful Father, for the blessed light of thy sun. We thank thee for our preservation during the hours of sleep, while we were not only helpless but unconscious; but thou never slumberest nor sleepest; thy watchful kindness and tender mercy are over all thy works. Grant to us that inward light which shall make us children of the day; may we walk securely by it, as being a ray from thee. Strengthen us, we humbly beseech thee, to the proper performance of every duty. Guide aright that understanding which cometh from the inspiration of thy spirit. Confirm in us whatever there is of good; enlarge our affections; purify our desires; grant us the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that all evil propensities may be resisted and overcome. In every duty of life, may we be diligent; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving thee acceptably. We thank thee especially for the privilege of assembling ourselves together here day after day, to seek that knowledge which will enable us to improve ourselves and assist others. May our duty here be done with fidelity, and may we be able to look back on each day as having advanced us somewhat on the way of knowledge and religious improvement; thus may we go on, from strength to strength, until at last we are received into thy kingdom. We ask and offer all in the name and as the disciples of thy Son, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom with thee be everlasting praises. AMEN.

LUKE XXII. 31–51.

WE thank thee, Almighty God, that when darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people, when the true knowledge of thee was lost even in thy chosen nation, thou didst manifest thyself in Jesus Christ, who had thy spirit without measure, and who was the express image of thy person. We thank thee that our lot has fallen where the light of thy gospel is shining fully upon us, so that no essential duty is left unrevealed; grant us grace, we beseech thee, to walk in this clear light without turning to the right hand nor to the left. If temptations assail us, may we look to thee and receive strength; if we are overcome of evil, wilt thou mercifully forgive us, and lead us back into the way of right; and so guide and direct us, by the influence of thy Holy Spirit, that when the end comes to each of us, and the future world shall be the only reality, we may look back upon the past, and read the remembrance of days devoted to duty, and of hearts given to thee. We thank thee for the health of body and mind which we enjoy; we thank thee for our opportunities of acquiring knowledge, and the means of imparting it; may we do both with faithfulness; we thank thee for the friends with whom thou hast connected us in the ties of strong affection; may they be in thy holy keeping; may we prove instruments in our respective spheres, and according to the measure of our respective abilities in spreading abroad the knowledge of thy truth; and may all men come to the knowledge and the love of thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

LUKE XXII. 52—71.

ALMIGHTY GOD, thou art from everlasting to everlasting; before the foundations of the hills were laid, thou wast; before the morning stars sang together, or the sons of God shouted for joy at a new creation. The universe is full of the majesty of thy glory, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, yet thy watchful eye is over every part of thy creation, the minutest, as well as the largest; the insect does not flutter its little hour and die but in thy knowledge and at thy will, and the sparrow falls not to the ground without being marked of thee. We thank thee for the revelation which thou hast made to us of thy providence, that we know assuredly that it is in thee we live, and move, and have our being. With thee to protect us, we would fear no danger, and, knowing thy constant care, no event which may happen to us should be regarded otherwise than as sent for our advantage. Grant us thy grace, that we may strive so to live as to be worthy to call thee *father*, that we may seek earnestly to do our duty towards thee. May we entertain the constant thought of thy immediate presence, and may a sense of thine excellency make us suitably afraid. Deliver us, we beseech thee, from all temptations too hard for us; let us not be overcome of evil; forgive us that we have gone astray from thee, and mercifully bring us back into the right path. Grant us those temporal blessings that thou seest to be best for us; may we receive them gratefully and use them wisely. Thus may we, with the help of thy Holy Spirit, advance on the way of everlasting life, and finally be received into thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

LUKE XIV. 15—24.

WE thank thee, Almighty Father, that when the fulness of time was come, thou didst send thy Son into the world to declare to thy chosen people the new revelation of thy love, and that through his apostles its light was spread to other nations, and is shining about us. Grant that it may illumine our hearts, and shine brighter and brighter there even unto perfect day. May we not reject the invitation to thy kingdom, or put off its acceptance to a more convenient season, and thus, at last, find ourselves among those who were called, but not chosen. But may we, now and ever, devote ourselves to do thy will; may we work steadily and earnestly while it is yet day, remembering that the night cometh, in which no man can work. In the midst of our weakness and sinfulness, we lose not our hope in thee; for thou knowest our frames, thou rememberest that we are dust, and thou dealest with us, not according to our iniquities, but according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. We bless thee, most merciful Father, for the light of another day; may it be to us a day of progress; may we this day take into our hearts the solemn resolve, that as for us, we will serve the Lord. We thank thee for those ties of kindred and affection by which thou hast bound us to so many of our fellow-men; keep them, we beseech thee, in safety, under the shadow of thy wing. May we, in our lives and conversation, do what is in our power to spread abroad the knowledge of thy truth, and may thy name be every where hallowed; and may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done, as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, now and forever. AMEN.

1 CORINTHIANS, III.

WE return thanks to thee, most merciful God, for our preservation during the past night, and that thou hast permitted us to assemble together, here day after day, in the possession of our faculties of mind and body, and hast furnished us with opportunities of acquiring knowledge. May we be able to look back upon the time that is passed as devoted to the best improvement of our privileges, and to an earnest exertion to obtain thy favor; but should we have to remember neglected duties, misapplied powers, or wasted time, grant us thy grace, that this reflection may stimulate us to make hereafter a better use of thy mercies, and to resolve that wherein we have done evil, we will do so no more. Grant us, we beseech thee, Almighty Father, time and opportunity to repent of all our transgressions, and deliver us from that temptation which is ever ready to mislead us; so that we may come to walk before thee worthy of the vocation wherewith thou hast called each of us in Christ Jesus; and to be received into thy kingdom with the greeting, "Well done, good and faithful servants." Grant us such temporal blessings as thou seest we severally need. May we receive them gratefully, and use them wisely, and render to thee the gratitude of a life spent in duty. We would not pray for ourselves alone, but for every one who needs the blessings for which we ask. May the great family of man learn to feel their relationship to each other, and their dependence on thee; and from every part of the earth may there arise unto thy name ascriptions of honor and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

MATTHEW XIX. 16–30.

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven, thou condescendest to watch from thy high and holy place over all thy children. We thank thee for that mercy which has assembled us together at the commencement of another day of our duties. Grant that it may be a day of steady perseverance in acquiring knowledge, of constant watchfulness over our wandering desires, of a strong and continued guard over our unholy passions. Grant, that with the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, we may come to the end of it wiser and better than we are now. Illumine, we beseech thee, what is dark in us, so far as such light is necessary to enable us to perform the duties of this life, or to prepare for that which is to come. Correct in us all false views of our relations to thee, and to our fellow-men. May the light of thy gospel, as exhibited in the life and precepts of thy Son, be our guide in every step of our progress; if we are tempted from the path of right, may we turn to that for strength to resist the evil one; if we have our cups filled with gladness, and are surrounded with prosperity, may we look to thy word and learn gratitude, and find guards against our danger; if we are afflicted, may we there find consolation; thus may we obtain guidance and direction in every event of life, support and comfort in the hour of death. May our friends partake largely of thy choicest blessings, and may they and we be found worthy to be reunited in thy heavenly kingdom, and unto thy name be all honor and glory, world without end. AMEN.

PSALM LXIII.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we thank thee for the pleasant light of another day, and for the mercy which has permitted us to assemble again together in this place of our accustomed employment. We thank thee for the measure of health which we enjoy, by which we are enabled to taste more keenly the blessings with which thou hast surrounded us; we thank thee for that intellectual structure by which we receive pleasure in acquiring and employing knowledge; may we, in pursuing learning, get also wisdom; we thank thee for those moral sensibilities which fit us to understand and love goodness, to draw our highest gratification from the performance of duty, and to love and adore thee. Grant us thy grace, Heavenly Father, that we may not neglect or misapply any of these high faculties; but that we may employ them faithfully in the performance of thy will, and thus secure thy favor, which is life, and thy loving kindness, which is better than life. May we seek to follow in all things the example and precepts of Jesus Christ, that perfect model; may his life and his death be ever present to our minds; and whatever may be the course of thy providence respecting us, may the same mind of entire submission to thy will which was in him, be also in us; and may thy holy name be so sanctified in our hearts, that we shall strive ever to please thee, that in every case where temptation assails us, we may strengthen and confirm ourselves in right, by asking, what is it that God requires of us; and may we be enabled to follow the light of that conscience which thou hast planted within us. Hear us in mercy, and receive us to thyself, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

ISAIAH LIII.

WE thank thee, Almighty Father, that thou didst so love the world, as to send thy beloved Son to suffer and die, the just for the unjust; and we would be filled with gratitude to him that he was willing to take upon himself the form of a servant, and to lay down his life a ransom for many. May we remember that he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and in his stripes we are healed; may our hearts warm with love to thee and to him, when we recall all that has been done for us, in our creation, our preservation and our redemption. We have lived for many years in the midst of thy mercies, protected by thy care, and ready to perish if thy supporting hand should be for one moment withdrawn from us; and yet we have lived too much without remembering thee, and keeping our thoughts and affections fixed upon thee. Forgive us, we beseech thee, for this and all our sins, as we freely and with perfect sincerity forgive every one who may have offended us. Deliver us from the allurements of vice; let it not have dominion over us; may the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer; may the knowledge of thy truth and the consolations of thy gospel be shed abroad upon the whole earth; and from every corner of it, may hymns of honor, praise and thanksgiving arise unto thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

MARK IV. 21–34.

WE return thanks to thee, Almighty Father, for our preservation during the past night, and for thy continued and watchful care over us since the earliest period of our existence. We thank thee that we have our lot in a land of gospel light and privileges, that we are permitted to worshsp thee under any form that may commend itself to our minds. Guide us by thy Holy Spirit, that we may worship thee aright; may we be filled with a sense of thine excellency; and may the contemplation of thy perfections make us continually strive to advance ourselves in wisdom and piety. We thank thee that there is a way provided in which we can approach thee; that there is a light by which we can read thy character. Keep us, we beseech thee, in this way; may this light shine into and illumine our hearts; and may it be our guide on the journey of life. If it be thy holy will to grant us prosperity, may we never forget that every good gift cometh down from thee; and may we render to thee our gratitude, and impart freely of our abundance to the necessities of others. If thou visitest us with adversity, may we call to mind the words of the ancient patriarch, "Shall we receive *good* at the hand of God, and shall we not receive *evil*?"—and may we possess our souls in patience; and, above all things, may we draw from every trial strength to do more and more perfectly thy will; thus may we go on from strength to strength, till we enter thy kingdom as the disciples of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

GALATIANS V. 13—26.

WE return humble and hearty thanks to thee, most merciful Father, that thou hast sent to us, through Jesus Christ, the revelation of thy law of love. Grant us the assistance of thy Holy Spirit that we may live in accordance with that law, loving one another, and doing good one to another as we have opportunity. We thank thee for that glorious liberty into which we have been called, by which a way is opened to us to escape from the slavery of sin, the destruction of that spirit which is the heir of an immortal hope. Grant that we may not make this liberty a cloak of licentiousness, but that, while we walk unbound, we may keep fast our dependence on thee, and look to thee, at every step, for guidance and support. Grant us, Almighty Father, clearer notions of thee and of thine attributes; make us more humble, more sincere, more pure in heart; send us that wisdom which is from above, which is first, pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; and grant that this divine wisdom may be the man of our counsel, and the guide of our lives. Let thy blessing be with those for whom we should pray. May thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven, and may all men come to the knowledge and the love of thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

I JOHN I.

WE return thanks to thee, most merciful Father, that we are again met together in the enjoyment of our ordinary health to commence another day of duty. We thank thee for thy continued care by which we live; may we feel, to some degree, how entirely dependent we are upon thee, and may we resolve to set ourselves from henceforth to perform to the best of our abilities all thy will, and to make to thee, for all thy mercies, the only return in our power, that of loving and obedient hearts; may our affections go out towards our fellow-men as freely as thine to us; thou causest thy sun to shine equally upon the wicked and upon the good, and sendest thy rain upon the just and the unjust; thus may our good actions be performed towards all who may need them. Has any one offended us, grant us, we beseech thee, thy Holy Spirit, that we may be enabled freely to forgive him; for if we forgive not our fellow-men their little offences towards us, how can we look to thee for the forgiveness of our innumerable sins? In all things, may we seek to follow the precepts and example of Jesus Christ, and to approach to thee through him that gave himself for us, that we through him might be saved. We humbly ask thy blessing upon those with whom thou hast connected us in the strong ties of kindred and affection. May they be in thy holy keeping, and may they and we so seek and so serve thee, that through thy mercy we may be admitted into thy kingdom. And may the knowledge of thee, the universal and loving Father, to whom all men owe entire love, and perfect obedience, and of the fellowship which results from being thy sons, be spread abroad among the nations, and thus may thy kingdom come into all hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

LUKE VII. 36—50.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, at the commencement of another day of accustomed employment in this place, we would lift up our voices to thee in thanks, and trust that our hearts bear company with our words even to thy throne. We thank thee for existence; that thou didst breathe into us the breath of life, and didst form us even in thine image, so that we may aspire to imitate thy perfections. We thank thee for the means of living; that while many are suffering for the very necessaries of life, thou hast bountifully supplied our wants, and ministered to us largely of comforts. We return thanks to thee that thou hast provided us with the means of preparing ourselves for future usefulness. Grant us, we beseech thee, the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that we may employ all our opportunities faithfully; whatever facilities we have, may we use them diligently; whatever is wanting, may we supply by increased devotion to our duties; thus may we use the talents thou hast committed to us, so as to call forth the approving sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." Let thy blessing be with our friends; may they be in thy holy keeping; grant that the knowledge and the love of thee may be spread abroad among the nations; grant that war may cease among men; that bondage and oppression may be no more; that the wolf may dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; that peace and love may guide the intercourse of men, and the earth become Emmanuel's land; and thy will be done here, as it is done in heaven. AMEN.

LUKE VII. 1—16.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we know that thy listening ear is ever open to the petitions of thy creatures; that thou art more ready to hear, than we to speak; more ready to give, than we to ask; grant to us, we beseech thee, the spirit of prayer, that we may ask worthily that which we ought to ask at all; grant us faith also, that we may pray with an entire confidence in thy mercy, believing that whether we receive or not what we ask for, that thou hast heard our prayer, and hast done what is best for us. We thank thee, that while we are pressed by a sense of our own weakness, and are surrounded on all sides by dangers beyond our control, we are called in thy gospel to look to thee, the Infinite Creator and Governor of all things, as our Father; may we keep this relation ever in our mind, and strive to do nothing unworthy of thy children; may our thoughts, words and actions, be kept in subjection to thy will. We would close our petitions this morning by coming to thee in the words of that perfect model on which Christ hast directed us to frame our prayers:—Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. AMEN.

JAMES V.

We give thanks to thee, Almighty Father, that thou hast brought us to see the light of another day, and hast again assembled us together, in the enjoyment of our ordinary health of body and of mind. Grant, we beseech thee, that our meeting here may not be in vain; may we look out, with a steady eye, on the field of duty before us, and rightly measure our strength and our responsibilities; may no temptation lead us from the path of right; may we be entangled by no evil; but may we have the guidance of thy Holy Spirit to keep us in the way thou wouldst have us follow. Our understanding cometh from thee; we pray thee to give it strength; deliver it from error; confirm it in right; and enlarge it that it may embrace the knowledge of thy truth. Thou hast granted us to partake of thy moral nature, and hast permitted us to come nigh to thee by that nature, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Whatever in us is dark, we beseech thee to illumine; whatever is low, raise and support; fill us with the love of thy truth; and may we, in every step of our progress through life, come nigher and nigher to thee, until at last we are found fit to mingle our voices with the innumerable multitude of the just made perfect which surrounds thy throne, in ascribing to thee all honor and glory, thanksgiving and praise, through Jesus Cnrist our Lord. Amen.

MATTHEW V. 33—48.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we would once more ackowledge the protecting care which has kept us during the hours of separation, and the unceasing mercy which permits us to assemble once more in this place of our accustomed employment. May we strive to use the means which thou hast put into our hands to our own advancement in knowledge and virtue, and to the improvement of all who may come within the circle of our influence; may we ever keep in remembrance the shortness of the time allotted to us here, and neither misuse it, nor neglect to employ it properly; may it be to each of us the path to a higher state of being, the threshold of a happy immortality. We deeply regret that we have hitherto fallen so far short of our duty, that we have so often done those things we ought not to have done, and have so constantly left undone those things that we ought to have done; and we beseech thee to forgive us; grant us thy grace that we may forsake our sins, and that wherein we have done evil, we may do so no more. Let thy blessing rest on those for whom we should pray; may our friends be in thy holy keeping; may we, each and all, according to our respective abilities, extend the knowledge of thy truth; and may thy name be known and hallowed throughout the earth; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and forever. AMEN.

PSALM LXXXIV.

We humbly and devoutly thank thee, Almighty Father, that thou didst, in breathing into us the breath of life, create us in thine own image, with capacities to seek and to enjoy those things in which thou delightest. Thou hast surrounded us with trials and temptations; for in no other way, than in resisting and overcoming these, can our moral faculties acquire strength. Assist us, we beseech thee, to carry on this conflict earnestly and steadily, looking to thee for help, and to him who was tempted like as we are, yet without sin, for guidance and example. Let no temptation beset us, that thou wilt not give us power to resist; may we not be overcome of evil, but overcome that evil in which we have heretofore lived with good. Thou knowest our peculiar weaknesses, and our peculiar wants; grant us help, we pray thee, Almighty Father, according to our respective needs; grant us the spirit of prayer, that whether in prosperity or adversity, in sorrow or gladness, we may ever turn to thee, and lay our thanksgivings or our petitions before thy throne. We entreat thee for thy mercy on all those with whom thou hast connected us in ties of kindred and affection; may the consolations of thy gospel be with all thy children; and may thy name be hallowed, and thy praise be sounded throughout all the earth; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, now and forever. Amen.

MATTHEW XXI. 14—31.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, the giver of every good and perfect gift, in whom we live and move and have our being, in our ignorance and folly we come unto thee, the source of wisdom, and entreat of thee knowledge and understanding; grant us clear perceptions of truth, and a deep conviction of its infinite importance; may we feel that as no error nor deceit can exist in thy presence, so we may never hope to enjoy thy favor, if we train our minds to falsehood; may we learn, and ever remember, that it is thy will that we should perform every duty, from the greatest to the least, with a perfect fidelity; and grant us, we beseech thee, that single-mindedness and that godly sincerity, that may enable us to give to every employment, and to every situation, its just measure, so that nothing may appeal to us as great or desirable which does not lead us forward in moral improvement, and nothing may seem to us mean or low which is useful to others, or profitable to ourselves. We thank thee, we render to thee our deepest gratitude, that we have ever before us a perfect model of how duty should be performed, in Jesus Christ; he took upon himself the form of a servant, and was despised and rejected of men, that he might perform thy will, and satisfy his deep love of mankind by calling them to repentance; may thy blessing be with us this day, leading us from evil, shielding us from danger, and bringing us nigher to thee; and unto thy name, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, be everlasting praises. AMEN.

PSALM XIX.

GLORIOUS art thou in majesty, Almighty Maker, fearful in praises, doing wonders; the whole earth is full of the majesty of thy glory. Though imagination wanders from infinity to infinity, yet we cannot even think of a place where thou art not, and where thy wonderful power is not exerted. Before light was given to the sun, before the foundations of the everlasting hills were established, ere the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, thou wast; and unchangeable thou still shalt be, when all the systems which thou hast created are crumbled into dust. When we reflect on the infinitude of thy character, we cannot help asking, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man, that thou visitest him?" but while these thoughts fill us with a proper humility, may we also remember that thou hast seen fit, in thine infinite mercy, to make us a little lower than the angels, and to crown us with honor and glory, because that, through thy Son, who is appointed unto us the way and the life, we may come to some understanding of thee, and can aspire to imitate, to some degree, the perfections of thy character. Grant, Almighty Father, that we may be guided by thy perfect law, that we may take fast hold on thy testimonies, and that our hearts may be purified through love to thee; may the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be always acceptable to thee, O thou! our Strength and our Redeemer! Hear us, our Father, for thy mercy's sake; and grant us an entrance to thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

PSALM LXV.

WE thank thee, Almighty Father, for our preservation during the past night; that thou, who never slumberest nor sleepest, didst guard us during the hours of our unconsciousness. With the refreshment which we have derived from sleep, may we enter on the duties of the day before us with vigor; may it be to us a day of intellectual and moral progress. Grant us the influence of thy good spirit, that we may henceforth set ourselves to advance with steadiness on the way of right, that this day may be to us the commencement of a higher state of existence. Bless, we beseech thee, most merciful Father, the purpose which assembles us together; may we be governed, in all our views of that purpose, by the highest sense of duty; may we bear constantly in mind our responsibility to thee, and may be ready, at any moment, to render our account. Lead us, we pray thee, into no temptation that may overcome our feeble virtue; deliver us from every moral evil, every spiritual stain. Let the example and precepts of Jesus Christ be the pattern of our lives, and may we strive, in word, thought and action, to conform ourselves to him. We would not pray for ourselves alone, but for every one who wants the blessings for which we ask. Grant the consolations of thy gospel to the afflicted everywhere. Raise up instruments to thyself to spread abroad the knowledge of thy truth, until every people, tongue and nation, shall know thee, the Father Almighty, and Jesus Christ, whom thou didst send; and unto thy name shall be the praise and the glory. AMEN.

JOHN XII. 23–36.

WE unite once more, Almighty Father, in returning thanks to thee for thy manifold mercies; may our hearts also go up to thee, and bear our words company to thine ear. We thank thee for the care which has preserved us from danger and from outward evil, which has kept us during the time of our separation, and has again united us in this place of our accustomed employment. Thy mercies are new every morning, and renewed every moment; we could not even draw one breath of life without thy permission, and thy watchful providence; and were it not for the understanding which thy spirit has given us, we should be like the beasts that perish. Grant, most merciful GOD, that the light of that understanding may burn freely within us, unclouded by error, unperverted by sin; may we learn to appreciate the privilege which we enjoy in being formed in thine image, and having the ability to aspire to thy perfection; and may we go forward in the performance of our duties, looking to thee for protection and assistance, and to Jesus Christ for direction and guidance; may we remember that there is no point of duty so insignificant, but that thou wilt require of us the fulfilment of it, and that there is no trial or temptation so hard, but that thou wilt find for us strength to bear, or a way to escape from it; grant us thy blessing, that being met together here in thy fear, thy spirit may be in the midst of us; and that to-day, and all our lives, it may assist to bring us on the way of eternal life; may it be with us to assist us to walk in the steps of thy Son; to follow his precepts, to obey him as our Lord and Master; and unto thee be the praise, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

PHILIPPIANS III.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, grant us the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that we may attain to that purity, that simplicity, that humility, and that teachableness which will enable us to lay a true and firm foundation for a Christian education; grant us strength to run with patience the race that is set before us; and may we not pause in it to consider and admire what we have already gained; but may we, forgetting the things which are behind, and looking forward only to those which are before, press for that high mark which thou hast set for us in the life and precepts of Jesus Christ; may we be ever ready to yield up every pleasure, however grateful, every hope, however brilliant, if they tend, in the least degree, to lead us out of the narrow, and it may be, rugged path of duty. We thank thee for all the assistance which thou hast given us to avoid evil, and to attain to holiness; may we use faithfully these means, and be able to reflect, at the close of every day, that we have drawn somewhat nearer thee; grant, that while we are pursuing our ordinary vocations, we may remember that we are accountable to thee for every talent and every opportunity which we enjoy; and may we not work negligently; but whatever our hands find to do, may we do it with all our hearts. O grant that fraud, injustice and oppression, may cease, and that men may learn to regard all of mankind, of whatever condition, as their brothers, to whom they owe love, as sons of God, to whose nature they owe reverence; deliver us from the undue love of worldly things, which brings with it a forgetfulness of thee; and may we strive to live as thy children. We ask, and offer all, as the disciples of thy Son Jesus Christ. AMEN.

1 CORINTHIANS, XII.

WE owe deep gratitude to thee, most merciful GOD, that thou hast cast our lot in a land of freedom and of Christian privileges. We are not cut off on any side by false notions in government, from prosecuting inquiries, and seeking truth; whatever our decisions may be, there is none to molest or make us afraid; to thee only are we held responsible for our belief; grant us the guidance of thy spirit, that we may not so misuse this liberty, that it may become to us a cloak of licentiousness; but may we use it in seeking earnestly the good and the true, and in taking fast hold on it when found. The rights which we claim for ourselves, may we freely render to others; may we remember that there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; and that there are diversities of administration, but the same Lord; that as thou hast granted to us different powers and opportunities, so thou hast opened to us different views of thy truth. Bind us together, we beseech thee, with an humble and comprehensive charity; humble, as arising from the perception of our own weakness; comprehensive, as including all of thy creation; may we in love seek to be perfect as thou art perfect; as thou causest thy sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and sendest rain upon the just and upon the unjust, so may we freely administer to all who may need them, such offices of charity and brotherly kindness, as thy goodness doth allow us to bestow; grant thy blessing upon all sorts and conditions of men; may thy gracious gospel go abroad widely among the nations; and may all come to the knowledge and the love of thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

MATTHEW VIII. 1–17.

ONCE more, most merciful Parent, do we strive to come into thy presence in prayer, to thank thee for the mercy which hath so far prolonged our lives, given us understanding, and permitted us to assemble together, day after day, for the improvement of that understanding, and the acquisition of the means of usefulness to others. Grant us, we beseech thee, the knowledge of thy truth, that our minds may not be darkened by error; lead us not into any temptation too strong for us; but grant us power to resist, or a way to escape, from the defilement of sin; may thy holy gospel be a guide to our path, and a lamp to our feet; may we be filled with a like spirit to that which was in thy well-beloved Son, a spirit of love to thee, and to our fellow-men; a spirit of thankfulness for mercies, and of entire submission to thy will. We thank thee for that high priest whom thou hast appointed; that he knows our infirmities; that he has borne our sorrows, and carried our griefs; that he was tempted like as we are, though without sin; may his example and his precepts, by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, have their proper effect in our hearts and lives; and may each day that thou sparest us, bring us nearer to thee and to heaven; bless, we beseech thee, those whom thou hast united to us in ties of kindred and affection; grant to them such mercies as they may severally need; above all, give them the consolations of thy gospel; be very mindful to the poor, the sick, the ignorant, and the oppressed wherever they may be; give them true riches; send them real health; enlighten their minds, and bring them out of bondage; and may thy name be honored throughout the world; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

EXODUS XV. 1–21.

ALMIGHTY GOD, when thou didst lead thy chosen people from the land of their bondage and oppression, it pleased thee to exhibit in many ways thy terrible power and majesty; at thy command the floods stood upright as an heap; and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea; by day thou didst go before thy people in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire; and mercifully didst thou bring them to a place of peace and safety. We thank thee, most merciful Father, that thou hast cast our lot in a land of gospel light and privileges, where each one sits, as it were, under his own vine and fig-tree, and there is none to molest us or make us afraid. Surely our lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, yea we have a goodly heritage. Surely we should have our hearts filled with gratitude to thee for the abundance of thy loving kindness and thy tender mercies. Grant us thy blessing, that we may not deliver ourselves to a worse than Egyptian bondage, that we may not be ingulfed in a deeper than the Red Sea; deliver us, we beseech thee, from the power of the sin which ever besets us, and lead us into no temptation too strong for our weak and wavering virtue. If the glare of prosperity mislead us, we pray thee to temper its light to us, and when we are surrounded by the shadow of adversity, may we see more clearly through the gloom the brightness of thy countenance. Let thy blessing be with our friends; may they be in thy holy keeping. May the knowledge of thy truth be shed abroad throughout the whole world, until from every people, tongue, and nation arise to thee ascriptions of honor and glory, thanksgiving and praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

LUKE XI. 1–13.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our heavenly Father, we beseech thee for the spirit of prayer; may we learn to pray without ceasing. May our prayers not rise merely from the pressure of calamity; or when we want some temporal advantage; or even from the joy of some unexpected gratification; but may we pray because we love to commune with the all-pure, the all-wise, and the all-good. May we commune with thee that we may partake of thy purity, thy truth, thy love: May we pray always to thee, that we may always retain our feeling of dependence on thee, for we would ever bear in mind, that it is in thee we live, and move, and have our being, May we always look to thee for our daily food, and receive it ever as of thee; and as we freely receive, so may we freely give. May we, with candid minds, bring our sins before thee, entreating of thee forgiveness, for with thee resides infinite mercy; and as we hope for mercy from thee; so may we freely render it, forgiving every one who may have offended us, in our pride, in our vanity, in our interests, or in any other way. May we, thy servants, who are assembled here for an especial purpose, so use the faculties of heart and mind with which thou hast endowed us, that we may never have occasion to regret wasted time, or neglected opportunities; but may we set ourselves with all diligence to use the means of moral and intellectual improvement which thou hast put into our hands, in a manner acceptable to thee. Grant that in our lives, and in our influence we may be the means of assisting to bring thy kingdom on earth; and may thy will be done here as it is done in heaven. All things we would ask as we are taught by Jesus Christ, and ever strive to come to thee through him. AMEN.

COLOSSIANS II.

WITH the light of another day, we would again seek, Almighty Father, the light of thy countenance; grant us the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that we may learn our duties, and find strength to perform them agreeably to thy will. Thou knowest our frames; thou rememberest that we are dust, and thou art not strict to mark iniquity; else, who could stand? May our hearts be turned unto thee; and may we receive our truest and highest pleasure in thinking of our relation to thee, of our responsibilities, of the perfections of thy character, and of an hereafter; thus may we endeavor to live in constant communion with thee. We thank thee that the way of approach is opened to us through Jesus Christ, and that there has been revealed to us that only name known among men whereby we can be saved; may we humbly trust in that name; may we come to thee through this living way; may we cultivate an earnest faith in the Saviour, as being the express image of thy person, as him in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; may it not be in vain to us that Christ lived, taught and died; but may we try to pattern our lives upon his; may we endeavor to comply with his instructions; and thus living, may we have a humble hope of that immortality which his death brought to light. We would pray for all sorts and conditions of men; that, according to their various wants, thy mercy may be revealed to them; and may all the dwellers upon earth join in one voice, in ascribing to thee honor and glory, thanksgiving and praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

LUKE XXIII. 24–46.

WE thank thee, Almighty Father, that when the earth was lying in ignorance, when darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people, thou didst cause a star to shine which has power to enlighten ignorance, and to dispel error; may this day-star shine into our hearts, and may our understandings and our affections be illuminated by it, until we are delivered from error and from sin; guide us to the feet of Jesus; and may we bring thither, not frankincense nor myrrh, not gold nor silver, nor precious gifts; but humble and contrite spirits; humble, for we would learn of him who was lowly of heart; and contrite, that we have lived so little as if he died for us. Grant us, we beseech thee, most merciful Father, grant us a like spirit to that which was in him; who took upon himself the form of a servant; who considered no office as low, if good to others flowed from it; who, being the Prince of life, yet submitted, for our sakes, to an ignomious death; who suffered persecution from the malice of his enemies, and yet forgave them freely; and who, though he could call down angels to assist him, yet submitted without a murmur to all his afflictions; may we be thus humble; thus forgiving, thus submissive; and may we so live as to have a hope of being one with him in heaven. Grant to us such temporal blessings as we severally need; deliver us from all trials too hard for us; and may we sanctify thy name in our hearts; and unto thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord, shall be ascribed the praise, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

PSALM LI.

WE would lift up our spirits before thee, Almighty Father, in earnest, heart-felt gratitude. We are surrounded on every side by thousands of evidences of thy watchful guardianship, thy constant and tender care. The earth is full of the exhibitions of thy great goodness. All thy creations look to thee for the supply of their daily wants; thou openest thy liberal hand, and they are filled with good. As for man, thy mercies to him are new every morning, and renewed every moment. Nor art thou satisfied with ministering to our temporal necessities; thou hast opened in our souls large capacities of spiritual enjoyment, and thou hast sent us springs of living water wherewith to fill them. Thou hast made the yoke and the burden of sin oppressive to our hearts, and hast sent us one whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light. Grant us, most merciful Father, the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that we may be duly grateful to thee for all thy mercies; create within us clean hearts, and renew right spirits within us; uphold us, we beseech thee, with thy free spirit, that all thy benefits may not be lost to us, but that we may approach nigher and nigher to thee, and dwell in that freedom wherewith Christ makes his followers free. Cause thy blessing to rest on those with whom thou hast connected us in ties of kindred and affection; may thy word go forth with power throughout the world; and may thy name be hallowed in every heart; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

LUKE XIX. 11–27.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our Heavenly Father, we desire to look up to thee with a full and perfect love, and to have this affection tempered by a sense of the perfections of thy character. We ask not of thee length of years, nor honors, for thou knowest what is good for us, and wilt give according to thy mercy, but we implore thee to deliver us from temptations to evil, and from the power of the sin which is ever ready to mislead us. Grant us the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perform with fidelity the duties of life; that we may bear with patience its trials, and enjoy with grateful hearts its mercies; may we faithfully measure our responsibilities by our opportunities; and may we remember that everything which we do is done in thy presence, and in the presence of a cloud of witnesses; that our walk cannot be so obscure, nor so humble, that we do not exert some influence; and that if our influence be not for good, it must be for evil. Enlighten us, we beseech thee, that we may see clearly the way of right; strengthen us, that we may walk therein without wavering; may we, in all our dealings with our fellow-men, be governed by a sincere and earnest love of them; may thy name be deeply and reverently hallowed in our hearts; and may thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and forever. AMEN.

LUKE VIII. 4—15.

We thank thee, most merciful Father, that on every side of us, in thy works, and in thy word, are seeds thickly scattered, of moral and intellectual improvement. Grant that neither the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, nor the allurements of sin, may cause our hearts to be hardened to the influences with which thou hast surrounded us; but may we so cultivate the portion of intellect which thou hast given us, and the moral nature which thou hast conferred upon us, as to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. We thank thee, that, day after day, thou hast preserved us from harm, thou hast permitted us to assemble together, and hast furnished us with the means of preparing, in some degree, for future usefulness. Grant that we may not misuse, or leave unemployed any of our opportunities; but may we so use them, as to be enabled to look back, when life's journey comes to a close, upon our little circle of duties faithfully filled; may a sense of thine immediate presence always accompany us; and may a perception of thine excellency make us suitably afraid; but yet may we remember that thou art a kind parent, full of loving kindness and tender mercies; that thou desirest not the death of any sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live; and may our hearts glow with gratitude and love to thee. Let thy choicest blessings rest on those with whom thou hast connected us in ties of kindred and affection; may our friends be thy friends; and may we all strive so to live, that through thy mercy we may at last be received into thy kingdom; and unto thy name be ascribed all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

HEBREWS XII. 1–14.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, thou didst of old speak unto thy chosen people through the mouths of thy prophets, and didst manifest thyself in terrible power and majesty. Thou didst give them a law, stern in its denunciations, rigid in the requirement of observances, hard to follow to the letter; but to us, and we beseech thee to fill our hearts with corresponding gratitude, thou hast sent tidings of great joy, through thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ. He comes to us, in his gospel, with messages of deep love; he tells us that thou art not willing that any should perish, but desirest that all should come to repentance; that thou so lovedst the world, that thou didst render up the just to suffer for the unjust, that all may have a way opened to come into thy glory. Thou hast set before us every motive which ought to affect the human heart to induce us to come to thee; love, gratitude, the desire of union with our friends, the hope of our own happiness. Thou hast set us in the midst of thy creation, in thy sight, in the sight of him who died for us, of departed friends who have loved us, and striven for us in their prayers, and of that innumerable company of departed spirits who surround thy throne. Seeing, then, that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, grant us, we beseech thee, the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that we may lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; and unto thee, through him, be all honor and glory, world without end. AMEN.

COLOSSIANS III.

WE return thanks to thee, most merciful Father, that thou hast placed us in the midst of thy beautiful creation, and hast furnished us with the means of attaining, and the sensibilities of receiving enjoyment. We know that on every side of us dangers lurk; that we are liable to be deceived by sophistry and misled by appetite; but we also know that there is safety for us under the shadow of thy wing. If any one lacks wisdom, he is bid in thy word to ask it of thee, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. Is any one tempted of evil? Let him ask worthily of thee, and he shall receive the influences of thy Holy Spirit to lead him aright. We are very ignorant, and would come to thee, the All-wise, for light; let the path of our duty be fully illumined, and may we walk therein securely; we are full of sin, having our thoughts ever straying from thee, and we call on thee, the All-perfect, and All-pure, to deliver us from temptation, and to lead us from evil. May thy gospel be the man of our counsel; in affliction, may it be our comforter; may we learn from it to enjoy and to improve prosperity; and in every action of life, may we be guided by its rules and its spirit. We humbly commend unto thee all for whom we should pray; may our friends be in thy holy keeping; may the knowledge of thy truth be shed abroad among the nations; and may one universal anthem of praise and thanksgiving to thee rise from every corner of the earth. Hear us, in mercy, Almighty Father, and guide us in truth; and deliver us from evil, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

FOR MONDAY MORNING.

ECCLESIASTES XII.

We thank thee, Almighty Father, that thou hast permitted us to enter upon another week of our appointed duties. May it be to us a week of useful employment, and may we be able hereafter to look back upon it, with the pleasant remembrance of its having been devoted to profitable use, to grateful labor, and to an earnest endeavor to perform thy will; may the influences which we received during thine appointed day of rest, be permanent and effective; may we henceforth diligently exert ourselves in the race that is set before us, and contend, with our whole hearts, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord; and to this end, wilt thou grant us thy Holy Spirit, that we may come to some higher knowledge of thee than we have yet attained to, that a great dread of thee may fall upon us, and a sense of thine excellency make us afraid to sin. We thank thee for all the incentives to duty, and all the assistance for our weakness, which thou hast given us; forgive us, that we have used them so little; forgive us, that we have wandered so far from thee; bring us, we beseech thee, into the path of life; and may we keep therein, guided by the light of thy gospel, and the example and precepts of thy Son. Let thy blessing be with our friends; may they be in thy holy keeping; may we all remember that this life is but the road to another; and may we so walk as to meet in thy kingdom; and unto thy name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we would ascribe all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

FOR MONDAY MORNING.

MATTHEW IX. 18—38.

We thank thee, most merciful Father, that thou hast permitted us to assemble again together at the commencement of another week; may it be to us a week of steady improvement in moral and intellectual culture; may it be a season of careful examination of ourselves; through all the windings of our hearts, may our search be ever guided by heavenly wisdom, and may we never discontinue it, till our whole heart is purified and rendered a fit temple for the indwelling of thy Holy Spirit. Grant, that in the week before us, if thou seest fit to spare us through it, we may perform all our duties with increased zeal and earnestness, and with greater singleness of mind; deliver us, we humbly beseech thee, from temptation; may our thoughts continually turn to thee, and find their rest there; may no improper desires, no ungrateful murmurings, and no bewildering doubts find entrance, or at least find abode, in our minds; but may our affections be pure, our gratitude unceasing, and our faith unwavering, so that we may be worthy to be called thy children, and may have a humble hope of being admitted into thy kingdom. Those blessings which we desire for ourselves, we would also ask for others, who may need them; may the afflicted everywhere receive the consolations of thy gospel; may oppression and bondage cease throughout the earth; and may the oppressed go free. Grant that we may be instruments, each in his sphere, of shedding abroad the knowledge of thy truth; and may thy name be hallowed in the hearts of all thy creatures; we ask, and offer all, in the name, and as the disciples of thy Son, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ; and render unto thee, for him, and through him, everlasting praises. Amen.

FOR MONDAY MORNING.

LUKE VI. 27—42.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we thank thee that thou hast graciously brought us to the beginning of another week of our accustomed employment. May we enter upon it strengthened by the reflections of the past day to a better attention to duty than we have yet given, and with feelings and sentiments purer than we have yet had; may the doors of the temple of knowledge not be open in vain to us; but may we enter in, and labor diligently there, and reap the reward of an understanding mind; may the invitations of thy gospel not be unheeded by us; but may we with simplicity, earnestness and fidelity, seek to do thy will, to follow, as far as we are able, the example and precepts of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Grant us assistance from above, Almighty God, according to our respective necessities. Are any of us wandering away from thee, and putting out of our minds, as an intruder there, the thought of our responsibility to thee? Awaken us to a sense of our true condition, and may a great dread of thee fall upon us, and call us to a perception of the relation which we bear to thee. Are any of us beset by temptation to sin? O! mercifully strengthen us to resist it, and find for us a way of escape! Are any afflicted among us? Grant them the consolations of thy gospel. We would include in our prayers all our brethren of the human family. Shed abroad thy light and thy truth. May those nations that are lying in the darkness of the shadow of death, have the light of immortality shed upon them through Jesus Christ; and throughout the whole earth, may man extend to his brother man the knowledge which he has gained concerning thee; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, now and forever. AMEN.

FOR SATURDAY.

2 TIMOTHY III.

We thank thee, most merciful Father, that thou hast preserved us in health and safety during the past week. We hope that it has not been passed without some improvement in knowledge and in virtue, nor without some sentiment of gratitude to thee. We beseech thee to bless the ordinances of thy religious worship to those whom thou mayest permit to attend upon them. May they be profitable to us for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. We thank thee for the moral and intellectual nature with which thou hast endowed us; that thou hast made us capable of comprehending, to some degree, thy nature, and of partaking, in some degree, of thine attributes. We thank thee for that understanding which comes to us by thy inspiration; wilt thou guide it aright. May we be enabled to attain that true wisdom which is from above, and is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. Deliver us, we beseech thee, from all temptation too hard for us; deliver us from evil; let it not have dominion over us; may the words of our mouths, and the meditation of our hearts, be always acceptable in thy sight, O thou! our Strength and our Redeemer! Support us to bear with patience all the trials of life; and may every duty be so performed as to bring us nigher to thee; send us as laborers into thy harvest; may we work diligently there, and strive, according to our ability, to assist to bring thy kingdom on the earth; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, world without end. Amen.

FOR THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR.

JOB XXXVIII.

GOD of the rolling year! thou hast established the order of the universe, and controllest the orbs which are moving at thy command through the immensity of space. Thou bringest out their hosts by number, thou callest them all by names, by the greatness of thy might, for that thou art strong in power; not one faileth; yet thou rememberest man, and art mindful of him, and dost visit the children of men in mercy. We desire to return fit thanks to thee, that thou hast kept us thus far in safety, and hast permitted us to enter upon another year. In looking back upon that part of our lives which is past, may we examine ourselves candidly and carefully; may no deceit come between thee and us; but may we lay open our hearts with perfect sincerity, and, seeing wherein we have done evil, may we resolve, thy grace assisting us, to strive to render to thee a better account, should we be spared to reach the close of another year. To this end, may we set ourselves to fill the year on which we are entering with duties faithfully performed, with kind services to our fellow-men, with a profound reverence and love of thee. Bless, we pray thee, our absent friends; may the whole world be instructed in the knowledge of thy truth, and of thy love; may justice be done on the earth; may oppression and bondage cease; may man learn to render to his brother man the mercy which he asks of thee; and may thy kingdom come, and thy will be don, on earth, as it is in heaven; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

FOR THE END OF A TERM.

MATTHEW X. 5–28.

WE thank thee, Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, that thou hast preserved us thus far on the journey of life; that thou hast furnished us with so many opportunities of acquiring knowledge; that thou hast opened to us freely the way of life. We thank thee, that day after day we have been enabled to assemble here in peace, and in health of body and mind. We regret that we have to look back upon so much of wasted time and neglected opportunity: we deeply regret that we are so habitually negligent of thy will, that we have used so little diligence in conforming to it, by a constant improvement in knowledge and virtue. Thou knowest our weakness, that we do not attain even to our own imperfect standards of right. Assist us, gracious Father, by thy good spirit, that we may be more worthy to be called thy children. Be with us as we severally rejoin our friends; may we find them in the enjoyment of health, and such earthly blessings as thou seest fit to bestow upon them. May our reunion to them, and our love to them, raise our love higher to thee; and may the blessings which they and we enjoy be themes of constant thanksgiving to thee, the giver of every good and perfect gift. We beseech thee that those of us who desire it, may be reassembled here, in due season, in safety, and with hearts better inclined to use conscientiously the means of improvement which thou hast furnished us; and may thy blessing, Heavenly Father, the love of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the communion and fellowship of thy Holy Spirit be with us, now and forever. AMEN.

FOR THE OPENING OF A TERM AND DEATH OF A PUPIL.

JOHN XIV. 18–31

ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, we thank thee that thou hast permitted this place to be once more opened for the reception of those who are trying to prepare for future usefulness. We thank thee that thou hast so fully provided for our intellectual, as thou hast for our moral wants; and we ask help of thee, that we may not pass our time here in stupid indolence, nor in foolish trifling, but that we may set ourselves with all diligence to improve our opportunities, and to use aright the means of advancement which thou hast provided for us. We believe there is a spirit in man, and that the inspiration of the Almighty has given him understanding; we pray thee so to guide us that we may not degrade this understanding, but that we may cultivate it assiduously and faithfully, and be found worthy to give help to others in preparing for the duties of this life, and the accountability of the next. Again hast thou seen fit to withdraw a member from our little circle; while we see one, to whom, a short time since, life was opening as pleasantly as to any one of us, called from this state of being, may we lay the lesson to heart, and by duty well done, and by love of thee, strive to be also ready. We would unite our prayers in sympathy with the bereaved family of our departed friend; grant to all its members the consolations of thy religion; and may thy blessing rest upon us, Almighty Father, and thy love dwell with us, even the love that thou didst declare to us through the life and the death of thy Son, and of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

DEATH OF ONE WHO HAD BEEN A PUPIL.

2 CORINTHIANS V.

ALMIGHTY GOD, again hast thou sent thine angel of death, and withdrawn from our little circle one who was once associated with us in a faithful pursuit of knowledge. We earnestly pray thee, Heavenly Father, that these warnings may not be sent in vain to us; may they teach us that we are standing on the very verge of a spiritual life; may we keep our eyes fixed on the future, and walk with a steady step and cheerful aspect towards the world promised to the good. Grant that we may emulate the virtues of our departed friend; may we have her earnestness, her fidelity, her devotion to duty, and her humble, trustful submission to thy will; and grant, most merciful Father, that when the end comes to us, we may lay down our lives with a pleasing consciousness that to the best of our ability, we have borne patiently the trials of life, that we have performed with fidelity its duties; and may we, through thine infinite mercy, be rejoined with our friends who may have gone before us in a higher state of existence, and be found worthy to do thee higher service. We would unite our earnest petitions, most merciful Father, that thou wilt send thy consolations to the parents of her who is gone. They have long leaned upon thy word; may it now prove to them their staff and stay; may they reflect that she whom they love, freed from the burden of her earthly tabernacle, is clothed upon with a heavenly garment, and is permitted to hold nigher communion with thee than she has ever enjoyed; and so may they turn with renewed hearts to the duties of life, and having filled them during their appointed time, meet at last their beloved one in heaven. We ask, and offer all, in the name, and as the disciples of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

ON GOING INTO A NEW SCHOOL-HOUSE.

2 CORINTHIANS IV.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our Heavenly Father, we thank thee that thou hast caused to be prepared for us the means by which we can, in some measure, fit ourselves for future usefulness. We thank thee for this house, in which we are for the first time assembled as a school. And now, Father, grant that we may consecrate to thee, not these walls of wood, for they are dead, but may we consecrate to thee, and to the work which thou mayest set before us, the loving hearts and minds here assembled. Make us worthy of the object for which we profess to have come together; fit us, we pray thee, to spread abroad thy truth; prepare us to help others to purify themselves for the great work of life. To this end, Heavenly Father, forsake us not in the trials and temptations to which we must be exposed; deliver us from the dominion of evil, whether it be from within, leading us to indulge unholy passions and wrong desires, or whether it be from without, striving to press us from the line of duty. We pray that thy presence may fill this house; may we always feel that God is here; and when thy servants shall go out from hence to undertake the duty for which they are here to prepare, may it be in no trifling, or vain, or mercenary spirit. And grant us to know that there is but one way by which we can get strength for duty, receive support in the hour of need, or attain to the knowledge and love of God, and that this way is Jesus Christ. May he be formed in our hearts, and may we be one with him, as he, Father, is one with thee. May thy blessing be with us, the presence of thy spirit, and the love of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

MATTHEW XVIII. 1–14.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our Heavenly Father, we return earnest thanks to thee, that we have been preserved during our hours of separation, and that thou hast seen fit to permit us once more to assemble together. Grant that a holy spirit from thee may be with each one of us, leading us to perform our duty faithfully and zealously. Enable us to see clearly our responsibilities, and may we be earnestly inclined to fill up the measure of them with fidelity. Grant to us a profound reverence for those natures which we undertake, in some measure, to educate. Fill us with a true and strong love of those who may come under our control. May we remember that what we do, and what we leave undone in respect to them, will determine, in some degree, their character here, and their condition in another life. Grant that we may never offend one of these little ones, by perverting their mind, either by precept or example; but may we be enabled, thy grace assissting us, to so walk before them, to so fulfil all our duties in their sight, that we may be to them a pattern and a guide. To this end, we pray to be delivered from the power of evil, and that we may not be left to struggle alone with temptation. Grant that we may make such constant and earnest endeavors to do thy will, as to obtain thy favor, which is life, and thy loving kindness, which is better than life. Let thy favor be with us, and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

MATTHEW VII. 13—29.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we thank thee that so many of those now in thy presence have been permitted to meet again in this place with health, and with their powers of intellectual and moral improvement. We beseech thee for thy blessing upon all of us. May the path of duty which is before us be traversed with heedful steps We are weak, and would look to thee, the Almighty, for strength; we are ignorant, and entreat of thee wisdom; we are sinful, and ask for thy forgiveness, and thine assistance, that, wherein we have done evil, we may do so no more. Assist us, gracious Father, to keep in mind the objects for which we are assembled here; may we ever remember that we are endeavoring to prepare, in some measure, to fit minds and hearts for the duties of this life, and for the responsibilities of another, and may we leave no means untried to become qualified for such a vocation. We beseech thee for the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that all which we do, may be done according to thy will, that the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, may be acceptable in thy sight. Let thy blessing rest on those from whom we are parted for a season; may they be in thy holy keeping; send abroad the knowledge of thy truth throughout the world; may all in affliction have the consolation of thy gospel; and may thy name be hallowed here, and thy will be done, as by the angels in heaven. AMEN.

1 JOHN IV.

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven, tenderly do thy messages of love fall upon our ears; not with stern accents does thy gospel call upon us; but it speaks to us of loving-kindness and tender mercies. Endue us, we beseech thee, with this spirit of love. In that peculiar relation which we are to sustain towards others, grant that we may not be governed by self-interest, the love of applause, the fear of personal consequence, or by the love of self-indulgence; but may we be guided by a real and deep interest in the immortal spirits that may be committed, in a measure, to our care. Grant to us a deep sense of thy infinite goodness in sending to us, through Jesus Christ, the message of thy love; and may we remember that, as we give with earnestness and fidelity, or as we withhold from others this message, we are, or are not, thy children. That we may be enabled thus to perform the work set before us, grant, we beseech thee, that our spirits may be baptised into love; may we read everywhere in thy word and in thy works, the messages of thy loving kindness and tender mercy, which thou art ever sending us. Grant us strength lest we fall under temptation, and faithfulness lest we fall into thy condemnation. We ask, and offer all, in the name and as the disciples of Jesus Christ, our Lord; and through him we would dedicate ourselves to the work of bringing, according to our ability, thy kingdom on the earth, that thy name may be glorified forever. AMEN.

PSALM LXXIII.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, we thank thee that we are once more permitted to join our hearts in the worship of thee. Day after day, thy watchful guardianship, thy constant and tender care have been over us, shielding us from danger, keeping guard over us through the watches of the night, supplying our daily wants, and providing us with the means of intellectual and moral improvement. We would not be ungrateful to thee; we would come to thee as loving children, and present our hearts before thee, as to a loving parent. Grant us thy grace, that we may measure justly the duties which are before us, and that we may set ourselves, with all our might, to the right performance of them. Inspire us with a love of those who may be committed to our charge; may we cultivate assiduously right dispositions towards them; may no backwardness, or waywardness, in our pupils, cause us to do anything of which we may hereafter regret, or to leave undone anything in our power which may bring them into the right way. We pray thee for thine assistance in our endeavors to become more humble, more sincere, more pure, more devout; may every act and every thought be regulated with reference to thy will, and may that will be done by us on earth, as it is done by the angels in heaven; may the knowledge of thee, through Jesus Christ, be sent abroad among the nations; and may thy word have free course and be glorified; and from every corner of the earth, may there arise to thee ascriptions of honor and glory, through our Lord Jesus Christ AMEN.

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